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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2004

Voting starts in Fla.; Bush inches up in polls

Some problems emerge in early voting in Sunshine State **Page 9**

The hazards of the convoy

Attention turns to convoys and vehicle safety following the refusal of up to 19 soldiers to drive a reportedly unsafe route in Iraq

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Soldiers from the 2nd Forward Support Battalion reach the end of an exhausting three-day convoy in late August to their new home in Iraq. Convoys have been targeted by insurgent militants with improvised explosive devices. A platoon from the 343rd Quartermaster Company recently refused to conduct a mission they said was too dangerous.

PHOTO BY SETH ROBSON Stars and Stripes

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY HOUSTON RUCK Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Staten Island ferry crash: The National Transportation Safety Board delayed its release of information about the Staten Island ferry crash on Monday, saying criminal prosecutors need more time to review the information.

The NTSB's last-minute announcement hinted at some degree of miscommunication between the federal agencies investigating the accident.

The NTSB investigates major accidents in order to make recommendations to make transportation systems safer.

Hurricane Jeanne costs \$93M: St. Paul Travelers Cos. said on Monday that it expects \$93 million in losses from Hurricane Jeanne after taxes and reinsurance, bringing its total losses from the four Florida hurricanes to \$402 million.

The loss from Jeanne includes \$26 million for commercial property, \$44 million for specialty lines, and \$23 million for personal lines.

Earlier this month the company said it lost an estimated \$94 million in hurricane Ivan, \$140 million from Hurricane Charley, and \$75 million because of Frances.

War on terrorism

Businessman extradition: German authorities on Saturday said they were awaiting a formal request from Spain to extradite a Syrian-German businessman suspected of being a key al-Qaida figure.

Mamoun Darkazanli, 46, was taken into custody in Hamburg on Friday under a Spanish warrant.

Spanish authorities allege that Darkazanli, who can be seen in a 1999 video at a wedding with some of the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers, was "the permanent contact person and assistant of Osama bin Laden in Germany," according to a statement from Hamburg authorities. He is accused of having given logistical and financial support to the network in Spain, Germany and Britain since 1997.

World

Journalists to receive awards: The Spanish newspaper El Mundo is giving journalism awards to U.S. investigative reporter Seymour Hersh and Mariane Pearl, widow of slain Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.

Hersh, 67, won an award created in memory of Julio Fuentes and Julio Anguita Parado, two El Mundo war correspondents who were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively.

The awards were announced by a jury in September, and Hersh and Pearl were to receive them in person at a ceremony Monday.

Anglican dispute: Calling for a cease-fire in the Anglican Communion's bitter dispute over homosexuality, a church commission Monday urged the U.S. Episcopal award to not elect any more gay bishops and for conservative African bishops to stop meddling in the affairs of other dioceses.

The commission, created last year after the consecration of V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, called for apologies from both sides, and for a long term process of reconciliation and defining the relationship among the world's Anglican churches.



Controlling wildfire: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protections employee Whurb Stampfli surveys the destroyed CDF Berryessa Lookout Tower near Guinda, Calif., on Thursday. Hand crews and air tankers continued working to encircle a wildfire near Lake Berryessa in the remote terrain northeast of San Francisco as a rainstorm helped firefighters gain control. Full containment of the blaze was not expected for another two days.

More weapons seized: French police using information from raids that netted the suspected leader of the Basque separatist group ETA and a huge arms cache have found more weapons in hideouts allegedly kept by the group, Spanish and French officials said Monday.

The new finds came Sunday night in the towns of Saint Pierre de Iruube and Urrugne in the Basque region of southwestern France, the officials said.

A regional French police official said the announcement of the additional weapons was simply a full accounting of caches that French and Spanish police detected on Oct. 3.

China, N. Korea talks: North Korea's No. 2 leader met his counterpart Monday in Beijing in a visit that Chinese leaders are expected to use to press Pyongyang to resume stalled six-nation talks on the dispute over its nuclear program.

Kim Yong Nam of North Korea was told by Wu Bangguo of China that "keeping the momentum of the nuclear talks and promoting the solution of the problem is the common wish of the international community."

State television showed the two sitting in a meeting room at the Great Hall of the People, the seat of China's legislature. Each was flanked by officials from their country.

Cleric to stand trial: Jailed cleric Abu Bakar Bashir will go on trial next week accused of involvement in the deadly bomb attacks on the island of Bali and at the J.W. Marriott hotel in the capital, defense attorneys said Monday.

On Friday, prosecutors charged the 67-year-old Bashir under the country's anti-terrorism law for allegedly ordering the Aug. 5, 2003, Marriott bomb that killed 12 people. They also charged him under the criminal code for plotting the Oct. 12, 2002, Bali bombings that left 202 people dead, mostly foreign tourists.

Court officials said the trial will begin Oct. 28, Bashir's lawyer, Wirawan Adnan, said Monday, adding that it will take place in a government auditorium in south Jakarta because so many people are expected to attend.

Karzai leads vote count: An explosion hit a car carrying an election worker in south-eastern Afghanistan on Monday, killing him and four other Afghan civilians, just over a week after the war-ravaged nation held its first presidential vote, officials said.

The vote count entered its fourth day with the chief rival of interim leader Hamid Karzai claiming that fraud had helped the U.S.-backed incumbent amass a 45 percent edge point lead in preliminary results from the Oct. 9 election.

Pursuing Fischer case: An American civil rights lawyer hired to breathe new life into chess legend Bobby Fischer's efforts to fight deportation to the United States accused U.S. officials on Monday of "grotesque" abuse of their powers and threatened to take the case to the Supreme Court.

Richard Vattunne accused Washington of persecuting Fischer for his political views, refusing to observe due process in the revocation of his U.S. passport and ignoring objections over the legality of its moves to have him deported.

U.S. Embassy officials denied Fischer was being treated unfairly.

Aristide accused of backing violence: Haiti's interim prime minister accused ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of backing a wave of violence from exile in South Africa, while a Chinese police unit arrived to join a U.N. peacekeeping force that has increasingly faced gunfire in the streets. Many of the 95 Chinese riot police smiled and waved Sunday after stepping off a jet for their country's first contribution to a U.N. mission in the Western Hemisphere.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Clarification

A story in Monday's editions on prisoner releases from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq included a U.S. military estimate of the number of prisoners released so far. That number, 1,200, was actually for September only, a military spokesman later clarified.

**Comics, advice and
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U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, 1,086 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 830 died as a result of hostile action and 256 died of nonhostile causes. The figures include three military civilians. The department did not provide an update over the weekend.

The British military has reported 67 deaths: Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, six; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; the Netherlands, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 948 U.S. military members have died — 721 as a result of hostile action and 227 of nonhostile causes, according to the military's numbers as of Friday.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Spc. Joseph H. Vanderlip, 21, Irvine, Texas, died Thursday in Baghdad, when his patrol came under fire; assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division; Fort Hood.

■ Army Pvt. 2 David L. Waters, 49, Auburn, Calif.; died Thursday in Baghdad, when a bomb exploded near his vehicle; assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 100th Mountain Division (Light Infantry); Fort Drum.

■ Army Lt. Col. Mark P. Phelan, 44, Green Lane, Pa.; died Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq, when a bomb hit his vehicle; assigned to the Reserve's 16th Civil Affairs Battalion; Morrisville, Pa.

■ Army Maj. Charles R. Soltis Jr., 36, Irvine, Calif.; died Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq, when a bomb exploded near his vehicle; assigned to the Reserve's 426th Civil Affairs Battalion; Upland, Calif.

■ Army Spc. Jaime Moreno, 28, Round Lake Beach, Ill.; died Wednesday in Baghdad, when he sustained a wound from a bomb exploded near his patrol vehicle; assigned to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division; Fort Hood.

■ Army Capt. Dennis L. Pinter, 30, Lima, Ohio; died Tuesday in Baghdad, after a bomb exploded near his patrol vehicle; assigned to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division; Fort Hood.

■ Army Spc. Michael S. Weiger, 30, Rochester, N.Y.; died Tuesday in Baghdad, after a bomb exploded near his patrol vehicle; assigned to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division; Fort Hood.

Car bombs kill 12 in Baghdad, Mosul

Iraq releases Fallujah's top negotiator in apparent bid to revive talks

By ROBERT H. REID

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Car bombers struck Baghdad and Mosul, raising the two-day death toll from the weapons to 12 by Monday.

The chief negotiator for the city of Fallujah dashed hopes for a quick resumption of peace talks despite his release by U.S. and Iraqi authorities.

In Mosul, a car bomb detonated Sunday morning on a bridge, killing five Iraqis and wounding 15 others, the U.S. military said Monday. The blast occurred when the suicide car-bomber collided with another car, setting off a giant blaze that damaged several other vehicles. A car bomber Monday hit a civilian convoy, killing one and wounding four others.

In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded late Sunday near a police patrol in the Jadiriya district, killing six people, including three police officers, and wounding 26 others. The blast hit a cafe near the Australian Embassy, although there were no Australian casualties.

The American death toll in the Iraq war reached a grim milestone this weekend: 1,100. The crash of two Army helicopters Saturday raised the toll to 1,097 servicemen and three civilians — two working for the Army and one working for the Air Force. The Associated Press count includes accidental and noncombat deaths.

Meanwhile, Fallujah negotiator Sheikh Khaleel al-Jumeili said peace talks to end the standoff in Iraq's major insurgent bastion will remain suspended as a protest against his detention by U.S. troops, who accused him of representing the militants.

"The fact is that I'm negotiating on behalf of Fallujah people — ci-



Chief negotiator for Fallujah, Sheikh Khaleel al-Jumeili, right, is welcomed by a friend after being released from U.S. custody in Fallujah, Iraq, on Monday, on the orders of Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi.

vilans, kids, women — who have no power but through being represented by somebody. Since the situation has got up to this, each can go wherever they want and we don't need to talk about negotiations," he told Al-Arabiya TV.

Al-Jumeili told the AP he was released Monday from U.S. and Iraqi custody after being detained Friday after talks broke down over the city's rejection of demand by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi to turn over terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Al-Zarqawi's group Tawhid and Jihad has claimed responsibility in numerous beheadings and suicide bombings, including two attacks on Baghdad's Green Zone last week that killed six, including four U.S. civilians.

Witnesses said al-Jumeili was picked up after leaving a mosque

following prayers in a village about 10 miles south of Fallujah.

Also Monday, Iraqi officials said a cash-for-weapons program for Shiite fighters in Baghdad's Sadr City and other locations was extended until Tuesday.

Iraqi officials hope that Fallujah leaders can be persuaded to negotiate a weapons buyback deal similar to one struck with Shiite radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr to end clashes in Sadr City.

U.S. forces have been waging days of air and ground assaults in Fallujah, targeting key sites purportedly used by al-Zarqawi associates.

The latest U.S. assault began Thursday after Fallujah clerics rejected the "impossible" demand to turn over the terrorist leader, insisting that al-Zarqawi was not in

the city. Fallujah fell under control of radical clerics and their armed mujahideen fighters after U.S. Marines lifted their three-week siege of the city in April.

■ In other violence: A militant group has killed two Macedonian men it accused of spying for the United States, Al-Jazeera television reported.

It broadcast a videotape from the Islamic Army in Iraq saying the Macedonians were captured "a few days ago outside an American base in Iraq."

■ An Australian journalist held hostage in Baghdad for 24 hours over the weekend was released unharmed, and arrived in Amman, Jordan, his employers said.

■ Baquba police patrol was ambushed Sunday night, injuring nine people, including seven policemen.

Militants pledge allegiance to al-Qaida

Terror group being led by al-Zarqawi

By RAWYA RAGEH

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The militant group led by terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, believed to be behind many deadly attacks in Iraq, has declared its allegiance to Osama bin Laden, citing the need for unity against "The enemies of Islam."

The declaration, which appeared Sunday on a Web site used as a clearinghouse for statements by militant groups, said al-Zarqawi's Tawhid and Jihad

group and al-Qaida had been in communication eight months ago and "viewpoints were exchanged" before the dialogue was interrupted.

"God soon blessed us with a resumption in communication, and the dignified brothers in al-Qaida understood the strategy of Tawhid and Jihad," said the statement, whose authenticity could not be confirmed.

The statement ran a Quranic verse encouraging Muslim unity and said al-Zarqawi considered bin Laden "the best leader for Islam's armies against all infidels and apostates."

The Jordanian-born al-Zarqawi is suspected of about a dozen high-profile attacks in Iraq, including last year's bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, and the beheading of numerous foreign hostages.

His relationship to bin Laden and the al-Qaida leadership has

long been the subject of considerable speculation. Although many experts believe al-Zarqawi had longtime ties to al-Qaida, others suspected that al-Zarqawi considered himself a rival to bin Laden for the mantle of chief defender of the Muslim faith.

The Bush administration said it was still trying to confirm the report.

"But we've always said there were ties between Zarqawi and al-Qaida, which underscores once again why Iraq is the central front in the war on terror," White House spokesman Trent Duffy said in Washington. "It's also proof positive of why the president's firm resolve to fight terrorists overseas so we don't face them in America's neighborhoods is the only clear way to prevail."

The statement affirmed the "allegiance of Tawhid and Jihad" leadership and soldiers to the chief of all fighters, Osama bin Laden. "It said the announcement

had been timed for the start of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan when "Muslims need more than ever to stick together in the face of the religion's enemies."

The statement also endorsed bin Laden's goal to "expel the infidels from the Arabian peninsula" — a reference to American influence in the al-Qaida leader's native Saudi Arabia, birthplace of the Islamic faith.

Al-Zarqawi's declaration appeared two days after the U.S. government formally declared his Tawhid and Jihad a terrorist organization. The listing imposes several restrictions on the group, including a ban on travel to the United States and a freeze on the group's assets in U.S. banks.

Al-Zarqawi also was indicted in absentia Sunday in his native Jordan along with 12 other alleged Muslim militants on charges of plotting a chemical attack that could have killed thousands of people.



al-Zarqawi

In decision yet discipline for reservists who refused mission

By TINI TRAN

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military said Monday no decision had been made on whether to discipline Army reservists who refused a supply mission last week, despite statements from their relatives that the soldiers would be discharged.

"It is too early in the process to tell if any disciplinary actions will be initiated," Maj. Richard Spiegel, spokesman for the 13th Corps Support Command in Balad, said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Families of some soldiers involved said Monday the commanders did not act on complaints that the convoy was hauling contaminated fuel or that their vehicles were in poor working order and were not sufficiently protected with armor.

Spiegel said no decision will be made on discipline until the investigation is completed and recommendations are made.

"I could not speculate as to why soldiers would be telling people that they are going to be discharged," he said.

The Army announced last week it was investigating up to 19 members of a platoon from the 343rd Quartermaster Company, based in Rock Hill, S.C., after they refused to transport supplies from Tallil air base near Nasiriyah to Taji north of Baghdad.

On Monday, Ricky Shealey of Quinton, Ala., father of one of the soldiers involved, told CBS' "The Early Show" that his son, Spc. Scott Shealey, "is being told he is going to be processed out of the Army with a general" discharge.

Shealey said his son "is very depressed about this."

A general discharge is considered a disciplinary action that would lead soldiers to fight losing most, if not all — of their veterans' benefits.

However, the commanding general of the 13th Corps Support Command, Brig. Gen. James Chambers, said Sunday in Baghdad that two investigations were under way and that 18 soldiers were involved. He also said none was under arrest, and it was too early to tell whether the soldiers would be disciplined.

Shealey said his son refused to go on the mission because the fuel they were to transport was tainted, and he feared it would be put in a helicopter that would later crash.

Army investigating soldiers in Iraq

The U.S. Army Reserve soldiers who refused orders to drive a dangerous route were members of one of a few supply units whose trucks are still unarmed, their commanding general said Sunday. The route is called "Main Supply Route Tampa" by the military.

Supply route along Highway 1



SOURCE: Global Security

"The command just totally ignored them when they told them the fuel was contaminated, and they were still going to send them out on this mission with contaminated fuel," Shealey told CBS. "The command was completely aware of the situation, and I think it's a command issue and not a soldier issue."

Teresa Hill of Dothan, Ala., the mother of Spc. Amber McClenny, told NBC's "Today" show: "It was about the fuel. It was the broken-down trucks. Unarmored vehicles."

Chambers denied the fuel was contaminated.

He said the Army is adding steel armor plating on unarmed vehicles and upgrading maintenance. Some of the soldiers told family members they refused the assignment because they lacked proper equipment and protection.

Chambers said the command will "assess armor" on supply vehicles, which are often subject to insurgent attack, and add steel plating if necessary.

The mission was later carried out by other soldiers from the 343rd, which has at least 120 soldiers, the military said.

Chambers has since ordered the 343rd to undergo a "safety-maintenance stand down," dur-

ing which it will conduct no further missions as its vehicles are inspected, the military said.

The platoon has troops from Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The issue of lack of appropriate equipment has been a long-standing complaint by low-level soldiers and higher U.S. command.

Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq from mid-2003 until this summer, sent a letter to the Pentagon in December 2003 complaining that supplies were short, and this was adversely affecting the ability of troops to fight. The Washington Post reported Monday.

Expert: Army not likely to punish troops for refusing supply mission

By SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The soldiers of the 343rd Quartermaster Company who refused to drive reportedly unsafe trucks down a dangerous route in Iraq aren't likely to face severe punishment, one military legal expert said Monday.

Too many troops violated the same concern, which led to a halt in missions while the unit's vehicles were inspected, and there is the risk that the incident could become a political football, said Eugene Fidell.

Fidell teaches military justice at Harvard Law School and serves as president of the National Institute of Military Justice.

With the political heat generated over the U.S. military involvement in Iraq, from prisoner abuse scandals to a lack of evidence on weapons of mass destruction, to reports troops were deployed ill-equipped, it's unlikely the involved soldiers will face harsh punishment or be made examples of, he said.

"Personally, I am quite skeptical if any serious disciplinary action ensues," Fidell said. "I think probably some people are going to get chewed out and I also wouldn't be surprised if the command takes a hit over serious appearance of lack of mission readiness."

That said, the alleged failure of the reservists to obey a lawful order is "obviously impermissible," Fidell said. It puts lives at risk, cracks the foundations of military discipline, and can harm morale.

"It may have been an unwise order, but you can't have people refusing orders. It's hardwired in military life, particularly in combat elements, and that's not something [leadership] will tolerate."

Up to 19 soldiers allegedly refused orders to drive fuel trucks because they had not been serviced and the convoy did not have an escort of armed vehicles for the missions from Tallil air base in southern Iraq to Taji, about 15 miles north of Baghdad.

"Not all of their trucks are completely armored. In their case, they haven't had the chance to get armored," Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, commanding general of 13th Corps Support Command, said during a weekend press conference in Baghdad, according to The Associated Press.

"They since have returned to duty, and it was 'too early' Sunday to determine if any will face disciplinary action, Chambers said.

Troops have measures in place to appropriately voice concerns, Fidell said.

"People in the field may have information that they may not be available to those giving the orders, and you can speak up, provided you do it in an appropriate fashion. In the meantime, you do as you're told," Fidell said. "And you always can go up the chain of command, again, provided you do it in an appropriate fashion."

There is flexibility built into the system, but "disobey a lawful order and do so at your own peril."

Still, "right there and right now, I'd be quite surprised if we saw any court martial charges," Fidell said. "You can't rule anything out, but it's my intuition. To bring down the wrath of the UCMJ on those people, right before a presidential election in which conditions of this war is an issue, might not be the right politics."

"Whether that kind of politics plays a role and gets communicated to those over there, we'll probably never know. This is probably an issue those in position of responsibility would prefer not to deal with, and would not want to make it a bigger issue."

Though still a serious infraction, the fact that so many refused the order lends credibility to their assertions, and points to another indicator that the soldiers likely will not face harsh punishment, Fidell said.

"It tends to suggests there was objective merit to their concerns," he said. "To have one person on a personal idiosyncratic mission is different from having a lot of careered reservists who are really concerned about being asked to something unnecessarily unsafe."

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14 held in active duty as potential witnesses in prison cases

By FOSTER KLUG

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The Army has extended active duty for 14 potential witnesses in the criminal trials of fellow reservists accused of abusing Iraqi prisoners, military officials said Monday.

While other members of the Maryland-based 372nd Military Police Company have returned to their civilian lives, the potential witnesses have been retained until their original two-year call-up orders expire on Feb. 22, said Army spokesman Maj. Elizabeth Robbins. Seven members of the company were charged after the release of photos showing soldiers from the unit humiliating detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. Pfc. Lyndie England, the reservist seen in some of the most notorious photos, faces a January court-martial.

The potential witnesses, who returned from Iraq in August, are stationed at Fort Lee, Va.

Robbins said the decision to keep them on active duty originated with Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, commander of ground forces in Iraq, and was approved by acting Army Secretary Les Brownlee.

Asked if the decision was a common Army practice, Robbins replied: "No, it's not."

"We took extraordinary care in making the request," she said. "We take seriously that we are asking these individuals to stay on active duty to perform an extremely important duty. This is not a normal thing we want to do the right thing here."

Robbins said there had been no decision on whether the soldiers would be retained past Feb. 22. "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," she said.

Eugene Fidell, a specialist in military justice at the National Institute of Military Justice, said the government has other ways to compel the testimony of witnesses at trial, including obtaining an enforceable court order.

"I think this was done for convenience, to basically make sure the people are available," said Fidell, who teaches military justice at Harvard Law School. "But I can think of few better ways to alienate witnesses on whose testimony you might have to rely than to basically put their lives on hold."

One soldier from the 372nd, Spc. Jeremy Sivits, is serving a one-year prison sentence after pleading guilty in May to three charges. Another member of the unit, Staff Sgt. Ivan "Chip" Frederick, plans to plead guilty Wednesday to four charges, said his attorney, Gary Myers.

Sanchez had reported shortages in Iraq

BY THOMAS E. RICKS

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. commander in Iraq complained to the Pentagon last winter that his supply situation was so poor that it threatened Army troops' ability to fight, according to an official document that has surfaced only now.

The lack of key spare parts for gear vital to combat operations, such as tanks and helicopters, was causing problems so severe, Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez wrote in a letter to top Army officials, that "I cannot continue to support sustained combat operations with rates this low."

Senior Army officials said most of Sanchez's concerns have been

addressed in recent months, but they continue to keep a close eye on the problems he identified.



Sanchez

The situation is "substantially better" now, said Gary Motsek, deputy director of operations for the Army Materiel Command.

Sanchez, who was the senior commander on the ground in Iraq from the summer of 2003 until the summer of 2004, said in his letter that Army units in Iraq were "struggling just to maintain... relatively low readiness rates" on

key combat systems, such as M-1 Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, anti-mortar radars and Black Hawk helicopters.

He said units were waiting an average of 40 days for critical spare parts, which he noted was almost three times the Army's average. In some Army supply depots in Iraq, 40 percent of critical parts were at "zero balance," meaning they were absent from depot shelves, he said.

He also protested in his letter, sent Dec. 4 to the No. 2 officer in the Army, with copies to other senior officials, that his soldiers still needed protective inserts to upgrade 36,000 sets of body armor, but that their delivery twice had been postponed in the month before he was writing. There were 131,000 U.S. troops in Iraq at the

time.

In what appears to be a plea to top officials to spur the bureaucracy to respond more quickly, Sanchez concluded, "I cannot sustain readiness without Army-level intervention."

Sanchez, who since has moved back to his permanent base in Germany, did not respond to telephone and e-mail messages seeking comment.

His letter of concern has surfaced after repeated statements by President Bush that he is determined to ensure that U.S. troops fighting in Iraq have all that they need to execute their missions.

"I have pledged, as has the secretary of defense, to give our troops everything that is necessary to complete their mission

with the utmost safety," he said in May. Earlier this month, he said in Manchester, N.H., that, "When America puts our troops in combat, I believe they deserve the best training, the best equipment, the full support of our government."

A copy of Sanchez's letter was given to The Washington Post by a person familiar with the situation who was dismayed that front-line troops had not been adequately supplied. That person also disagrees with the Bush administration's handling of Iraq, but said that was not part of the motivation in providing the document.

Lt. Gen. Claude Christianson, the senior logistics officer on the Army staff at the Pentagon, said the readiness problems in Iraq peaked last fall but largely have been addressed.

British official details U.S. request for troop redeployment in Iraq

BY ED JOHNSON

The Associated Press

LONDON — Britain is considering a request by the United States to redeploy a small number of British troops in Iraq so as to free up American soldiers for anti-terror operations, Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon told lawmakers Monday.

Hoon said British commanders would send out a reconnaissance team on Tuesday to assess the request, and said the chief of defense staff was expected to make a recommendation "by the middle of the week."

In a statement to the House of Commons, he rejected claims by opposition lawmakers that any redeployment would be a political gesture designed to bolster President Bush ahead of presidential elections on Nov. 2.

"I want to make clear that the request is a military request," Hoon told lawmakers. He stressed that America, contrary to media reports, had not asked for British soldiers to be sent to Baghdad or Fallujah.

"The U.S. request is for a limited number of U.K. ground forces to be made available to relieve U.S. forces to allow them in turn to participate in further operations elsewhere in Iraq to maintain the continuing pressure on terrorists," Hoon added.

"We are obviously considering this request," he said, adding that issues such as the timing of any redeployment, the length of the period of operations, command and control arrangements and which regiment to send had yet to be worked out.

U.S. military command in Iraq made the request for assistance Oct. 10, he added, and said it involved "U.K. land forces" operating outside of the British controlled sector in southern Iraq. Several newspapers have reported that Britain is considering sending its reserve force — the 650

strong First Battalion Black Watch — to fill in for U.S. troops expected to launch a major offensive against insurgents in Fallujah.

Britain currently has some 9,000 troops in Iraq, operating in the relatively peaceful south around the port city of Basra.

Sending British soldiers further north into the U.S.-controlled sector, where there are more attacks by insurgents, carries a risk of higher casualties and would be politically sensitive for Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Some lawmakers are opposed to British troops coming under U.S. command, believing that may put soldiers under a greater threat of attack. Many believe that three decades of Irish Republican violence in Northern Ireland have given British soldiers experience in urban patrolling and helped them develop both a well-honed instinct for ambushes and a sense of restraint. Critics suggest the U.S. military lacks such experience and has a tendency to overreact.

Hoon dismissed such concerns.

"If we agree to this request, the arrangements will ensure that U.K. forces have a specific task. They will be responsible for a particular area. There are no practical difficulties for U.K. forces operating alongside those from the U.S.," he said.

Earlier Monday, opposition Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy said he could not see why the U.S. military, which has some 130,000 troops in Iraq, might need further support from British soldiers.

"It is hard to see why that constitutes a crucial contribution in the American point of view," he told British Broadcasting Corporation, and said Britain should be considering withdrawing from Iraq. "This, far from being an exit strategy, runs the risk of being an entanglement strategy that draws Britain further into the mire," he added.

Soldiers share school supplies



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Members of the 1st Infantry Division's Task Force 1-18 Infantry pass out school supplies at an elementary school in Tikrit, Iraq, on Saturday. The supplies included glue, pens, pencils and more than 720 notebooks for the children to use. The presents were part of a larger Task Force 1-18 plan to improve schools in their areas of operation. In cooperation with the Tikrit City Council, Task Force 1-18 has made improvements to local schools in Tikrit, Kadisya, and Wujat and Owja.

Putin: Terrorists want Bush to lose

The Associated Press

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that terrorists are aiming to derail President Bush's chances at re-election through their attacks in Iraq.

"I consider the activities of terrorists in Iraq are not as much aimed at coalition forces but more personally against President Bush," Putin said at a news conference.

"Intentional terrorism has as its goal to prevent the election of President Bush to a second term," he said. "If they achieve that goal, then that will give international terrorism a new impulse and extra power."

Still, Putin didn't say which candidate he favored in the Nov. 2

U.S. presidential election.

"We unconditionally respect any choice of the American people," he said. "I don't want to spoil relations with either candidate."

Putin also noted his continuing disagreement with Bush on Washington's invasion of Iraq, which Russia strongly

opposed as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

"Russia was always against the military operations in Iraq," he said.

Despite their differences, Bush and Putin have cooperated closely in the international war on terror, with Russia assenting to the deployment of U.S. forces in former Soviet Central Asia for operations in neighboring Afghanistan. In exchange, Washington has mostly looked the other way on Moscow's continuing war in breakaway Chechnya, which Russia alleges is being fueled by international terror groups.

On his last visit to Central Asia in June, Putin appeared to be backing Bush's assertion that Iraq was a threat, saying at a summit in Kazakhstan that Russia had notified Washington about intelligence that Saddam Hussein's regime was preparing attacks in the United States and its interests abroad.



Putin

MIDEAST NOTEBOOK

Juliana Gittler and Ward Sanderson

Quest for shoes nets thousands of pairs

The 68th Chemical Company of the 1st Cavalry Division would have been content to collect a few hundred pairs of shoes for some Baghdad children. Instead, the unit received more than 5,000 pairs of flip-flops, sandals and sneakers from people in the United States.

And the boxes kept coming. First Lt. Brian Cyr, from Nebraska, started the shoe drive nearly three months ago. With so many shoes delivered through his unit, he's bringing the drive to a close.

The 68th Chemical Company is currently serving in the Al Rashid district of southern Baghdad. The unit began the shoe drive when they saw that many Iraqi children had nothing on their feet.

Publicity from the event widened when Catholic News Services, a national newsletter, picked up the story. Shoe shipments, as well as a few monetary donations, came in from all over the United States.

The chemical company distributed 1,000 pairs of shoes initially in one sitting. As more boxes started coming in, the company would take the shoes out on patrol and hand them out to groups of kids and their mothers.

Out of pogs

You know those pogs things that the Army and Air Force Exchange Service gives instead of change in the Middle East? Troops often grumble about them, but even these cardboard discs occasionally become scarce.

Recently the International Zone change not only ran out of metal money, it also ran out of pogs. A sign posted pleaded for troops to trade them in for greenbacks.

Dutch marine acquitted in fatal shooting of Iraqi

The Associated Press

ARNHEM, Netherlands — A Dutch court acquitted a Marine Monday of criminal negligence in the fatal shooting of an Iraqi civilian last year.

Sgt. Maj. Eric Overvoorde had fired what he said were warning shots at a group of Iraqis gathered near a cargo container and his men were guarding. One of the shots struck and killed 22-year-old Iraqi Abdullah Moushar Aadhaf, possibly after ricocheting off the ground.

Overvoorde, 43, was the first Dutch troop to face a court-martial since the Netherlands sent around 1,400 troops to southern Iraq in August 2003.

Oscar the friendly ghost

Speaking of exchanges, an Iraqi translator was observed peering now after new American DVDs inside one of the military stores. He took no notice of Academy Award winners "Mystic River," "The Godfather" or any other famed-over flicks that graced the rack.

But at the sight of Eddie Murphy on the cover of "The Haunted Mansion," he stopped. His face was that of a serious critic, but his eyes showed genuine joy. "This," he said, "is a beautiful film."

Re-enlist connection

Chief Warrant Officer Charles McNorton performed his first re-enlistment since his promotion to a commissioned officer — for a very familiar soldier.

McNorton, with the 1st Cavalry Division's 15th Personnel Services Battalion now deployed to Iraq, re-enlisted his wife, Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McNorton, a career counselor with 1st Cavalry Headquarters at Fort Hood, Texas, by video conference last month.

"It was a very special thing," said Charles McNorton in a press statement. "I really appreciate the retention folks putting this together."

The re-enlistment requires that the enlisting soldier, a commissioned and noncommissioned officer and the U.S. flag be present.

The video conference ceremony was made possible by Sgt. Maj. Merie Henry, the 1st Cav Division's command career counselor based in Baghdad. Melissa McNorton works on his re-enlistment team at Fort Hood.

The division re-enlisted about 1,100 soldiers in Baghdad and tripled its stabilization numbers — when soldiers don't ask for a duty station — over last year, the division reported.

E-mail Juliana Gittler at: itjgittler@jcs.mil
E-mail Ward Sanderson at: sandersonw@mail.esrps.osd.mil

Holiday mail deadlines set

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Postal Service has released the 2004 holiday recommended mailing dates for those wanting to send packages to or from the United States or forces in the Middle East.

Different dates have been set for the various mailing options and mail destined for military members with deployed units, which have APO addresses starting with 963.

There is a 70-pound limit for incoming or outgoing APO/FPO mail.

■ **For mail going to APO and FPO addresses:**

Package sent parcel post, the recommended deadline to send is Nov. 13;

Space-available mail — Nov. 27;

Parcel airtail — Dec. 4;

Priority mail, first-class cards and letters — Dec. 11; for APO addresses beginning with 963 — Dec. 6.

Express mail — Dec. 20. Local post offices can determine which APO/FPO addresses can receive express mail, but Navy ships do not have express mail services.

■ **For mail from APO and FPO addresses:**

Space-available — Nov. 20.

Parcel airtail — Dec. 4.

Priority mail, first-class cards and letters — Dec. 11.

Express mail — Dec. 18. Only certain base post offices can send express mail.

The USPS also recommends that all mail carry the servicemember's full name, with or without rank, military organization or unit, and full APO or FPO address, but should not indicate the deployed country's name in any part of the address.

A kiss goodbye



BRAINERD (MINN.) DISPATCH/AP

Sgt. Mike Stasko of Hayfield, Minn., with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment of the Minnesota National Guard, kisses his 8-year-old daughter, Annie, after a deployment ceremony Saturday in the Brainerd High School gymnasium in Brainerd, Minn. Several guardsmen from the unit deployed to Iraq.

Three 2nd ID GIs die in Ramadi offensive

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

YONGSAN GARRISON, South Korea — Three more 2nd Infantry Division soldiers have been killed in Iraq amid a new offensive against insurgents in Ramadi, the Pentagon confirmed Monday.

The soldiers were killed Oct. 14 when an improvised explosive device was detonated near their convoy in Ramadi, the Department of Defense said. Their deaths bring to at least 14 the number of 2nd ID casualties since the 2nd Brigade Combat Team reached Iraq 10 weeks ago.

The Army identified the soldiers as Staff Sgt. Omer T. Hawkins II and Pfc. Mark A. Barbert, both of the 44th Engineer Battalion; and Spc. Bradley S. Beard of the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment.

No other information on the incident was available from the Pentagon. But according to news reports, U.S. forces — including the 2nd Brigade and the Marine units that are in charge of the area of operations — have fought pitched battles since last week with insurgents in and around Ramadi, the capital city of the restive Al Anbar province.

Marine Corps officials have said the raids are aimed at insurgents working in concert with fighters from nearby Fallujah, media reports said.

Officials from the 1st Marine Division, which has operational control of the area in which the 2nd Brigade is serving, believe insurgent fighters have been moving freely between Ramadi and Fallujah to coordinate attacks on U.S. forces. In addition to the Ramadi offensive, U.S. aircraft have spent the past week

conducting airstrikes on suspected targets in Fallujah.

According to the Associated Press, U.S. forces moved into Ramadi beginning Oct. 13, occupying strategic posts, sealing roads and searching buildings.

The three 2nd Infantry Division soldiers were killed the next day, the Pentagon said.

According to the Detroit News, Barbert was a 22-year-old father of a 3-year-old boy. Barbert was riding in a Humvee when his convoy was struck by the IED, family and friends in his hometown of Shelby Township told the paper.

"I told him Daddy is in heaven with Jesus and the angels," Nicole Hale, the mother of Barbert's son, told the paper. "He knows who his daddy is but he doesn't understand what happened yet. We're going to make sure there are plenty of tabs and photographs around for him, so that there are lots of memories."

Hawkins, 31, was from Cherry Fork, Ohio, and also assigned to the 44th Engineers.

Beard, 22, of Chapel Hill, N.C., was with 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment. Information from their hometowns was not available Monday.

Both the 44th Engineers and 2-17 Field Artillery have now suffered four casualties in Iraq, all of them listed as combat deaths.

Twelve of the 14 2nd Infantry Division soldiers killed so far in Iraq have died from combat wounds, according to the Pentagon.

Second Infantry Division officials have said they will hold a group memorial in South Korea for all of the fallen soldiers sometime in the coming weeks.

E-mail Joseph Giordono at: giordonoj@jstpsrps.osd.mil

Clearing Iraq roads risky job for wreckers



DALLAS MORNING NEWS/KIT

In September, John Bullington unloads a U.S. military Humvee from his tow truck after recovering it after it was hit by an explosive in Baghdad.

BY GRETLE K. KOVACH

The Dallas Morning News

BAGHDAD — The call comes around 9 p.m., just after dinner. A military police unit was blasted by a roadside bomb on patrol in Baghdad. American soldiers are standing on a blockaded street in the dark, waiting for a wrecker to retrieve their battered Humvee.

Mark Compton, a redheaded, wisecracking 37-year-old from rural Kentucky, is riding foreman tonight in a small convoy of trucks dispatched to snatch the disabled vehicle.

He grabs his bulletproof vest, helmet and two radios and climbs three steps into the passenger seat of a 50-ton truck. With an armed military escort in the lead, they roll off the base, headlights dark and windows down, listening for gunfire.

Each day in Iraq, insurgents immobilize military vehicles and civilian supply trucks with bombs left on roadsides or driven in cars by suicide attackers. They lob rocks, pipes and grenades from highway overpasses and fire rockets at passing convoys.

KBR, formerly Kellogg, Brown & Root, the Houston-based Halliburton subsidiary contracted to feed and house U.S. troops in Iraq, also runs this war zone wrecking service. It has retrieved more than 1,000 vehicles, with the Baghdad team picking up as many as 11 a night.

For the first time, KBR allowed a reporter to accompany the recovery truckers on a recent night mission.

Armed with good humor under fire, the wreckers keep traffic flowing on Iraq's main supply routes, recover salvageable equip-

ment and prevent insurgents from planting bombs in vehicles left too long on the roadside.

Each time they drive off the military base, the insurgents know they are coming.

Compton mans the radio, while his driver, a Persian Gulf War veteran, keeps a calm foot on the pedal. The soldiers in the lead scan the overpasses with searchlights.

KBR, which runs more than 700 trucks a day in Iraq and Kuwait, has hauled more than 273 million gallons of fuel and almost 50 million pounds of mail.

The unit is under investigation on accusations of overbilling the U.S. Army for meals and gasoline in Iraq. KBR's no-bid contract to rehabilitate the Iraqi oil industry has been another focal point of criticism.

The recovery truck crews have suffered nothing more than bumps and bruises. But KBR and its subcontractors have had 46 deaths to date.

At last, they spot the green glow sticks on the road where U.S. soldiers and Iraqi police are securing the wreck.

Compton hops out of the truck and directs the driver of a 40-foot Landoll flatbed up to the Humvee, whose extra-armored steel doors are pocked with ball bearings and shrapnel. The tires are shredded, and the thick side windows shattered.

The Humvee's driver, Spc. Sam Stahlhut, 20, of Fort Wayne, Ind., limps around the wreck, amazed everyone on the 21st Military Police Company patrol walked away from the attack.

The Iraqi police wave and drive off. Within minutes the Humvee is loaded and the KBR recovery convoy heads out again into the Baghdad night, taking a different route home.

Back at the camp, the recovery truckers crack jokes while they wait for another call.

"Dude, can we paint the wrecker pink?" asks John Bullington, 28, of New Orleans, a former advertising manager.

They are a colorful group, many of them tattooed chain smokers, with call signs such as 007, Smoke, Big Daddy Rabbit and Mohawk. They drive trucks with names such as Bulldog and American Bad Ass.

"We're one big happy dysfunctional family," Bullington said.

Some tell their wives they are working in Kuwait so they will not worry. But above all, these combat truckers came to Iraq hoping to make good money for their families back home.

"We're all here for money. I'm not on some kind of glory mission," said Compton, who talks to his two children in Garfield, Ky., several times a day.

As dawn illuminates the ghostly hulks of the wrecks they have retrieved in the last few weeks, it is a reminder of the long road ahead before Compton makes it home alive.

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Dead soldier's mom expresses rage, grief

N.J. woman says she's no activist, just exercising her right of free speech

By JOHN P. MCALPIN
The Associated Press

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP, N.J. — When President Bush and the first lady come looking for votes in New Jersey, Sue Niederer vows to be nowhere near them. She doesn't want to risk finding herself in handcuffs again.

Last month, police escorted Niederer from a rally after she demanded to know why her son, Army 1st Lt. Seth Dvorin, was killed in Iraq. Dvorin died in February while trying to disarm a bomb.

Video footage of Niederer holding a sign with the words "President Bush You Killed My Son" was splashed across television screens for days. Prosecutors later dropped trespass charges against her.

But while President Bush and his wife were scheduled to be an hour's drive away on Monday, Niederer has no plans to join any of her fellow war protesters outside the campaign rally.

"I'm not going near any of the Bushes," said Niederer, a substitute school teacher. "I'm not going to subject myself to any of it. My point was made."

Instead, Niederer will be where she was the day she learned her son died.

"I'll be in a classroom. Speaking to the kids is more important," she said.

Niederer, 55, won't be teaching Monday. Instead, she'll be an anti-war lecturer, a mission she began two weeks after her son died when another mother asked if she would join a protest outside Princeton University.

That protest in February was Niederer's first brush with confrontational politics. But, Niederer insists she is no radical activist, no plottier against America. During the Vietnam era, Niederer said she avoided war rallies, and was intent on staying home and raising her children.

"This is who I am, what you see here, just a person who loves children and misses her son terribly," she said.

"Every time somebody else is killed, I grieve again. Every mother grieves again," she said. "This is not a political statement. We hurt. We hurt terribly."

Army recruiters first talked to Seth Dvorin when he was a junior at South Brunswick High School. Niederer told her son to go to college.

"He was smart," she said. He wanted to go to Syracuse University, but at the time all the family could afford was Rutgers, she recalled.

Dvorin eventually joined the Army after graduating college in 1992. The next year, he married his college sweetheart, and that September left for Iraq.

But, by the end of 2003, he was disillusioned with the war.

During a two-week leave Niederer begged him not to go back.

"He said, 'Mom, I'm a lieutenant. I have 18 men under me. I must bring my men home safe. That's my mission,'" Niederer recalled.

Dvorin died Feb. 3. He was 24.

The next day Niederer watched the news and saw Bush administration officials say there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

"My son dies the day before and you're telling me the reason we went to war was a mistake. How do you think a mother feels?" Niederer asked.

Angry, she voiced her frustration to reporters who called asking about her son's death. She spoke to friends, neighbors and family at the funeral where more than 400 people gathered to mourn her son.

She then got a call from another mother who had lost a son in the war. The woman invited her to join others protesting outside an appearance by Secretary of State Colin Powell at Princeton University.

The rally led to more protests. Community groups invited her to speak. So did schools. Niederer joined activists outside the Republican National Convention in New York, and traveled to Washington, D.C., whenever a march was planned.

Her neighbors and co-workers are proud, she said. She also welcomes those who disagree, like those she met at the Bush campaign rally and those who call her house at night to say her son volunteered to fight.

"It's free speech. That's what I'm doing," Niederer said.



Above: Sue Niederer, of Pennington, N.J., whose son, Seth Dvorin, a member of the 101st Airborne Division, died in Iraq in February, marches in a March 20 anti-war protest in New York. Left: Niederer poses Friday with Osner, Dvorin's cat outside her Hopewell Township, N.J., home. President Bush will be an hour's drive away on Monday, but Niederer has no plans to join any of her fellow war protesters outside the campaign rally.

AP photos

New dean at AF Academy: Scandals have led to improvements

By ROBERT WELLES
The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Brig. Gen. Dana Born, the newly appointed academic dean of the Air Force Academy, said the institution has emerged stronger following a sexual assault scandal that led to widespread reforms and a leadership shake-up.

Nearly 150 women came forward last year to say they had been assaulted by fellow cadets between 1993-2003, with many alleging that they were punished, ignored or ostracized by commanders when they spoke out.

In an interview in her office, Born said, "We all have to become smarter about how we see sexual assault and sexual harassment," adding the scandal "was the lightning rod that hit the Air Force Academy."

Nominated by President Bush in July, Born is the first woman to be faculty dean. She succeeds Brig. Gen. David A. Wagie, who was criticized last year by a congressional panel for failing to recognize the academy's growing sexual assault problem. Cited by the House of Representatives, Wagie retired in August.

Outside investigations concluded the academy's culture created the conditions

that contributed to the scandal. That includes lingering resistance to having female cadets at all. Last year, a survey of cadets found 22 percent did not believe women belonged here, more than a quarter of a century after they were first admitted.

However, cadets have become more accepting of women, according to a survey earlier this year.

Many victims said they were left afraid by commanders and school staff or penalized for coming forward. Others said their grades dropped dramatically.

In a statement Born sent to faculty members, she told them to watch for signs of trouble — everything from "pronounced changes" in academic performance and conduct to a failure to perform assignments.

"The experiences that I have had and the academic training that I have had will be fruitful," said Born, who was previously a professor and head of the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership Department at the academy. She also is a 1983 graduate of the academy.

"You are changing the heart. You are changing the moral basis," said Born, adding that the target is not just students but

staff and teachers. "It is focusing on everybody getting better."

Lt. Gen. John Rosa, the academy superintendent brought in at the height of the scandal, is pushing the staff to make sure gender, discrimination and harassment issues are part of virtually every class.

Cadets have had lectures about the need for treating each other with respect, and detailed explanations of what constitutes sexual assault. Every cadet takes annual classes in ethics and leadership.

Born, a marathon runner who was recruited to the academy as a track and cross country athlete, believes that just as the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks led to renewed patriotism and increased vigilance in the country, the sex assault scandal fostered a better environment at the academy.

"Truth rises to the top, and good things can come out of bad situations," said Born, who is married to a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel and is the mother of two daughters.

Born compares the struggle here to one of her 26.2-mile-long races.

"You might be tired after two miles, but if you want to get where you are targeting" you have to keep going, Born said.

"We've got to keep running in that direction."



AP

Brig. Gen. Dana Born talks Friday in her office at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado. Born says the school is recovering from the sex scandal when nearly 150 women came forward to say they had been assaulted by fellow cadets.

IN THE STATES

Fla. voters begin casting early ballots for election

BY JILL BARTON
The Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — With memories of 2000 and the state's bitter fight over ballots still fresh, Floridians began casting votes Monday and within an hour problems cropped up.

In Palm Beach County, the center of the madness during the recount four years ago, a Democratic state legislator said she wasn't given a complete absentee ballot when she asked to opt for paper instead of the electronic touch-screen machines. Several voting sites in Broward County had problems with laptops connected to elections headquarters.

And a brief computer system crash in Orange County paralyzing voting in Orlando and its immediate suburbs.

A steady flow turned out Monday morning at more than a dozen sites in Palm Beach County. Patrick Flanagan, who went to the county's election headquarters to cast his ballot, said he voted early because he wanted to avoid the long lines expected on Election Day. He said he's voted on the touch-screen machines once before, and both times have gone "very smoothly."

"I'm a computer-phobe, and it seemed easy enough to me," said Flanagan, who added that he had no concerns about his vote being counted.

Steve Perez, 44, said he went early to cast a "protest vote" for Ralph Nader.

"What's important is that you vote. I didn't want to get in all the hoopla with all the turnout in Election Day," said Perez, a substitute teacher.

While backers touted early voting for people like Flanagan as a way to avoid long lines on Nov. 2, some have criticized the concept, saying it increases opportunities for fraud without significantly boosting participation.

Some groups urged Florida voters to ask for paper absentee ballots because of concerns over the state's new touch-screen voting machines and any potential recounts. Voters Monday morning could choose either method.

State Rep. Shelley Vana said the paper absentee ballot she was given at a Palm Beach County site was missing one of its two

pages, including the proposed amendments to the state constitution. She said election workers were indifferent when she pointed out the oversight.

"There was absolutely no concern on the part of the folks at the Supervisor of Elections Office that this page was missing. This is not a good start. If there are incomplete ballots out there, I can't imagine I would be the only one getting it," she said.

County elections supervisor Theresa LePore did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Early voting also went under way Monday in Texas, Colorado and Arkansas. Other key states this year have already begun in-person voting, including Iowa, Nevada, Ohio and New Mexico. Balloting by mail is under way in Oregon, the only state in the nation that has done away with polling booths altogether.

Early voting and touch-screen equipment were introduced in Florida after the 2000 election, in which this crucial state decided the result by only 537 votes as butterfly ballots and hanging chads to the national debate. The early voting continues at a limited number of sites in each county until Election Day, when regular polling places will be open.

In Miami-Dade County, about 150 people gathered Monday morning for a rally led by the Rev. Al Sharpton and former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. Some people carried homemade signs that said "Early Voting Counts" and "Every Vote Matters."

On the issues



Can the U.S. government achieve a balanced budget this decade?

President Bush



"My administration inherited a recession that was followed by the shock of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, which produced budget deficits. During my administration, we have reduced the rate of growth for non-security discretionary spending from the

15 percent growth rate in the last budget year of the previous administration to less than 1 percent in my 2005 budget. My 2005 budget contains detailed plans for pro-growth economic policies and spending restraint that will cut the deficit in half in five years."

Sen. John Kerry



"We've suffered record deficits under George Bush as the size of government has exploded, and that's why I stand by a sensible plan that will cut the deficit in half in my first term, while investing in economic growth

and investing in workers. To restore fiscal discipline I will repeal Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy, cut excesses in government and implement the McCain-Kerry Commission on corporate welfare to cut special tax loopholes and pork barrel spending projects."

AP

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San Francisco.....	\$349
Chicago.....	\$310

Tax not incl. All fares are roundtrip for Travel Next Out. Good dates to all destinations.

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Russia 1 week \$ 1290
EU = Economy class. Minimum 12 days. All-in full week sightseeing incl.

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Kerry tours Fla. as Bush speaks in N.J.

BY MARY DALRYMPLE
The Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Florida voters started casting early ballots for U.S. president on Monday, and Democratic candidate John Kerry was to spend all day asking for their support in this crucial state that decided the last election.

President Bush was to give a speech about security in New Jersey, arguing that his battle plan for fighting terrorists is better than his rival's.

Polls show the two candidates running neck-and-neck in Florida as well as across the nation, although some recent national polls give Bush a slight edge.

Campaigning in West Palm Beach, Kerry criticized the president's conduct in Iraq, and urged voters to take advantage of laws that allow Florida residents to cast their ballots before Election Day.

Early voting was introduced in Florida after the drawn-out recount in the 2000 election, in which Bush defeated Al Gore by a mere 537 votes across the state.

Kerry referred to a report in The Washington Post that the U.S. commander in Iraq, Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, said last winter that his supply situation was so poor that it threatened the troops' ability to fight, and said Bush was guilty of "arrogant boasting" about Iraq.

"Despite the president's arrogant boasting that he's done everything right in Iraq and that he's made no mistakes, the truth is beginning to catch up with him," Kerry said. "The president's tough talk about always supporting the troops is nothing more than empty rhetoric."

The Bush-Cheney campaign

struck back, saying Kerry voted against money for Iraq and Afghanistan.

"John Kerry has demonstrated his ability to say anything at anytime to anyone if it benefits him politically," said spokesman Steve Schmidt.

Florida, which gave Bush the victory in the controversial 2000 election by a razor-thin margin, remains a battleground this year, and Bush planned a campaign trip to the state later Monday as well.

Whichever candidate gets more votes in Florida captures all 27 of its electoral votes. A total of 270 electoral votes is needed to win the presidency.

The two campaigns traded accusations of using scare tactics to win support.

Bush, flying from Washington to New Jersey, accused Kerry of alarming voters by suggesting that the president would jeopardize Social Security for older Americans and bring back the military draft for young people.

Bush said the United States will remain "on alert" about the possibility of a terrorist strike on U.S. soil before the election, but said, "we have no specific threat information on that. Otherwise, we would have let people know."

Campaigning in Fort Myers, Fla., Kerry's running mate, John Edwards, accused Bush of using scare tactics and exploiting the Sept. 11 attacks for personal political gain.

"George Bush is playing on people's deepest fears," Edwards said. "He's exploiting a national tragedy for personal gain."

Before heading to New Jersey, Bush signed a bill giving the Department of Homeland Security about \$33 billion for the budget year that began Oct. 1.

High court orders Texas redistricting review

BY GINA HOLLAND
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court handed Democrats a victory Monday, ordering a lower court to reconsider a Texas redistricting plan that could give Republicans six more seats and a firmer hold on their majority in the House.

The decision won't affect next month's elections, though any GOP gains on Nov. 2 could be wiped out later if the plan ultimately is deemed unconstitutional.

States must redraw boundaries

every 10 years to reflect population shifts found during the census.

Five appeals over the Texas boundary-drawing pose an interesting question: Can political leaders of a Legislature force district drawing more frequently than once a decade, to make more seats winnable for members of their party? The case has been exceedingly contentious. Democratic legislators twice staged walkouts from the Texas Legislature to protest district-drawing that benefited Republican candidates. And House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, was admon-

ished recently by the House ethics committee for getting too involved.

In a brief order, justices threw out a victory for Texas Republican legislators, and ordered a three-judge federal panel in Texas to reconsider the issue.

The Supreme Court has been divided on how much politics should be allowed in redistricting. In a 5-4 ruling last spring, justices left a narrow opening for challenges claiming party politics overly influenced election maps.

The court said Monday that the Texas map should be viewed again, in light of that decision.

Also Monday, the Supreme Court declined to reinstate a lawsuit filed by a former Georgia representative who claimed her loss in the 2002 Democratic primary resulted from wide-scale Republican crossover voting.

The court let stand a 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that threw out Democrat Cynthia McKinney's lawsuit, citing a lack of sufficient evidence. The ruling said the Democratic Party is free to hold an open primary.

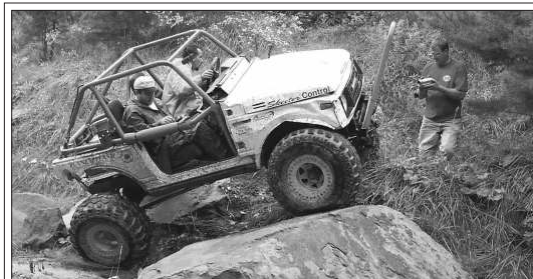
Also Monday, the court refused to consider whether former Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker was wrongly barred from raising new

arguments in challenging his 1998 conviction for tax conspiracy.

Tucker pleaded guilty to the charge, but now wants to have his conviction overturned based on new information.

The Supreme Court also declined Monday to resurrect a lawsuit by three California women who say Planned Parenthood withholds information linking abortions to breast cancer.

The court, without comment, let stand a decision by the California Supreme Court dismissing the suit and ordering the women to pay more than \$77,000 in attorneys' fees.



Jason Miller and passenger John Nachtigal drive across rocks on an abandoned eastern Kentucky surface coal mine near Harlan, Ky., in early October. Mike Shelton is videotaping the drive. All three are members of Kentucky Mountain Crawlers, an off-road group based in Harlan County.

Ky. cashes in on off-roading

Old coal mines are big draw for all-terrain tourists

BY ROGER ALFORD
The Associated Press

HARLAN, Ky. — Out-of-state license plates tell the story of eastern Kentucky's rising popularity among off-roaders.

Pickup trucks bearing tags from as far away as Florida and Ohio roll through town, some pulling trailers laden with all-terrain vehicles, others carrying heavy-duty rock-crawling machines, on their way to some of Kentucky's harshest terrain.

They're pouring into a region where coal mining has turned mountaintops into off-road paradises.

"They love it here," said Preston McClain, a member of the group Harlan County Ridge Runners who guides visitors on rides along the Kentucky-Virginia line. "We've got views from these mountaintops that you don't find anywhere else."

Thousands of miles of rocky, rutted mountain roads have made eastern Kentucky a primary destination for a growing number of people who ride all-terrain vehicles or plod cross-country in four-wheel-drive trucks and SUVs with tires that look like they came off a farm tractor.

Andy Jones, director of strategic development in Harlan County, wants to capitalize on the phenomenon to rejuvenate a local economy as rocky as any of the backwoods trails.

While some other communities have frowned on off-roaders, Harlan County welcomes them. Jones said people in Harlan want to draw more riders to spend money in hotels, restaurants and shops.

"People are serious about it," he said. "I see tremendous potential. This is part of the strategy we have to improve the economy of our country."

Harlan County leaders have leased 7,000 acres of abandoned coal mine land, complete with an assortment of rugged trails and roads, and are working on adding about 30,000 additional acres.

That land is open to the monstrous off-road vehicles, ATVs, even dirt bikes, and has already begun to pay off, said Ronnie Shoop, a member of the group Kentucky Mountain Crawlers.

Shoop said liability issues can be a problem for off-roaders on private land. Harlan County solved the problem by leasing the land and accepting the liability. The county leaders hope to be able to apply revenues from coal-severance taxes to the cost of

insurance.

"This probably is the single best tourism plan," Shoop said. "It's not only going to give local people something to do, but it will create a market for people to come from out of town."

Some of the eastern Kentucky back roads, originally built for coal trucks, wind through the mountains for 100 miles or more, linked through a network of abandoned surface mines.

Kentucky Tourism Commissioner Randy Fivess said he wants to promote all aspects of outdoor recreation, including motor sports, while at the same time protecting the environment.

Jones believes that the abandoned coal mines that have left many of eastern Kentucky's mountaintops treeless could hold the key to turn the region into a center for off-road recreation. People want to see views from atop the Appalachians, he said.

Jones said off-road activities will be simply one part of Harlan County's tourism package. He said people already are flooding in to see the elk, black bear, deer and turkey that have become so plentiful.

GI's daughter delivered after 4-car crash in Ill.

Vehicle split in two after sideswiped

The Associated Press

MARINE, Ill. — Her name is MARINE, and her birth was close to miraculous.

America Lynn Rae Bartlett was born Saturday at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, only a short time after her parents' car was ripped in two in a terrifying crash on Interstate 70 in Illinois' Madison County.

The infant's father, Alan Bartlett, 21, is a soldier who recently was deployed to Iraq. He almost didn't survive his trip from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to his home in the village of Munnsville, N.Y., in Madison County, N.Y.

Alan Bartlett was at the wheel when his small car was involved in a four-vehicle crash near Marine shortly after 3:30 p.m. Saturday. His wife, Kelley, 19, who was eight months pregnant, was his passenger.

Alan Bartlett's mother, Sheila Bartlett, was driving another vehicle ahead of her son. With her was a daughter, Jessica Bartlett, and the two children of Alan and Kelley Bartlett, a boy, 1, and a girl who will be 2 in December.

According to the Illinois State Police, an eastbound tractor-trailer driven by Dennis Lucas, 36, of Montezuma, Ind., sideswiped

Alan and Kelley Bartlett's east-bound Pontiac Sunbird as the truck was changing lanes. Alan Bartlett lost control of his car, and it went across the median before being struck by a westbound vehicle driven by Connie Hammond, 42, of Highland, Ill.

The impact tore the Sunbird in half, with part of the car landing off the road and the other part flying through the air and striking a

westbound Venetia police car driven by Officer Timothy Fisk Jr., 23.

Alan Bartlett was treated at Anderson Hospital and released, and Kelley Bartlett was in good condition Sunday.

At Barnes-Jewish, where doctors performed an emergency Caesarean section to deliver a premature but apparently healthy baby girl.

Hammond was the only person seriously hurt; she was still in a hospital on Sunday.

"I guess God is really looking over my brother and our family," Alan Bartlett's sister, Leigh Bartlett, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on Sunday from her home in Munnsville, 25 miles east of Syracuse.

State police said the seriousness of the injuries was limited because all of the victims were wearing seat belts.

Arson suspect a killer?

BRENTWOOD, Calif. — Preliminary information suggests that a man who apparently committed suicide after setting a fire in Yosemite National Park had earlier killed his wife and two young daughters, police said.

The 32-year-old Michael Celebrini, 32, and her daughters, 6-year-old Nina Celebrini and 6-year-old Samantha Fouch, were found Saturday in their home in Brentwood, about 50 miles east of San Francisco.

The same day, rangers in a re-

monte area of the national park's Hetch Hetchy basin found a body that they believe is that of an arsonist who ignited a 2,000-acre blaze in the area.

Brentwood police Sgt. Tom Hansen said Sunday that investigators suspect the body is that of Richard Celebrini, who they believe killed his wife and the girls.

Autopsy results were not released Sunday, but park spokesman Scott Giedman said the suspected arsonist appears to have died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

From The Associated Press

Study: Race wealth gap grew after recession

White households have more net worth than blacks, Hispanics

By GENARO C. ARMAS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The enormous wealth gap between white families and blacks and Hispanics grew larger after the most recent recession, a private analysis of government data finds.

White households had a median net worth of greater than \$88,000 in 2002, 11 times more than Hispanics and more than 14 times that of blacks, the Pew Hispanic Center said in a study being released Monday.

Blacks were slowest to emerge from the economic downturn that started in 2000 and ended in late 2001, the report found.

Net worth accounts for the values of items such as a home and car, checking and savings accounts, and stocks, minus debts such as mortgage, car loans and credit card bills.

Greater wealth means a greater ability to weather a job loss, emergency home repairs, illness and other unexpected costs, as well as being able to save for retirement or a child's college tuition.

According to the group's analysis of Census

Bureau data, nearly one-third of black families and 26 percent of Hispanic families were in debt or had no net assets, compared with 11 percent of white families.

"Wealth is a measure of cumulative advantage or disadvantage," said Roderick Harrison, a researcher at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington think tank that focuses on black issues.

"The fact that black and Hispanic wealth is a fraction of white wealth also reflects a history of discrimination."

After accounting for inflation, net worth for white households increased 17 percent between 1996 and 2002 and rose for Hispanic homes by 14 percent to about \$7,900. It decreased for blacks by 16 percent, to roughly \$6,000.

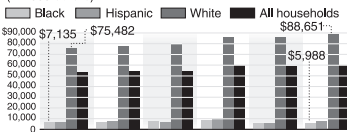
Regardless of race and ethnicity, the median net worth for all U.S. households was \$39,700 in 2002, a 12 percent gain from 1996.

Only white homes recouped all their losses between 2001 and 2002. Both Hispanics and blacks lost nearly 27 percent of net worth between 1999 and 2001; the next year Latinos had gained almost all back (26 percent) though blacks were up only about 5 percent.

Wide gap in net worth among races

Since 1996, the net worth of white households has increased while that of black households have decreased, according to a study by the Pew Hispanic Center. White households still have 14 times greater net worth than blacks and Hispanics.

Median net worth of households by race and ethnicity
(in 2003 dollars)



NOTE: Net worth is total asset ownerships including property, interest earnings, checking accounts, savings bonds, retirement accounts, stocks and funds, business, vehicles and other assets; 2000 data not available; all households includes Asians and others

SOURCE: Pew Hispanic Center

AP

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Irishman dead at 105

NEW YORK — William Geary, an ex-superintendent with the Irish Garda Síochána police, who was fired in 1929 and spent seven decades trying to clear his name, died of heart failure Oct. 14 at a Queens hospital, the Irish Times reported Monday. He was 105.

Geary left Ireland when he was dismissed, accused of taking a \$180 bribe from the Irish Republican Army in Kilrush Co. Clare, Ireland, where he was stationed.

It took up until 1999 that Ireland's former justice minister John D'Onoghue pardoned Geary and gave him a superintendent's pension plus about \$75,000 restitution.

Tour bus accident

MARION, Ill. — A tour bus taking people home from a charity event ran off a highway and overturned, injuring dozens of passengers, authorities said.

The bus was en route from Chicago to Holly Springs, Miss., with 42 people on board when it ran off the pavement of Interstate 57 and overturned late Sunday, said Jamie Moak, a State Police dispatcher.

Authorities said the bus passengers were residents of Tennessee and Mississippi who were returning home after participating in a prostate cancer fund-raiser in Chicago organized by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Eleven people were being treated at Herrin Hospital, nursing supervisor Martha McDonald said.

Butterfly migration

AUSTIN — The annual migration of monarch butterflies that crosses Texas en route to Central Mexico is the smallest in 14 years, experts say.

Hundreds of millions of the large, colorful butterflies migrate to near Mexico City from the United States and Canada each fall. But herbicides, changing farming practices and weather are apparent culprits in reducing the numbers.

The migration funnels through a 300-mile-wide corridor from Oklahoma City to Del Rio before crossing the border.

From The Associated Press

OPINION

We can limit the price we pay for use of oil

The Providence (R.I.) Journal

Can the United States kick the oil habit? A new study says the oil can.

It may ultimately have little choice, with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez saying that oil could fairly soon cost as much as \$100 a barrel.

But high oil prices have a silver lining: They encourage oil-consumption efficiency. This was a lesson of the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s, which led to increased fuel-efficiency — which paid off, at least for a while, in increased economic growth and reduced dependence on oil imports. By the mid-1980s, the '70s oil-price surge had led to a 17 percent decline in oil consumption and a 30 percent drop in imports, while gross domestic product grew by 27 percent.

Unfortunately, though, it wasn't a lesson that we retained.

Imported oil now accounts for about 56 percent of U.S. consumption — up from about 35 percent in the mid-'80s. Lowering that percentage would greatly improve national security, largely because much oil comes from such unstable places as Venezuela, the Mideast and Africa.

It would also improve the resilience of the U.S. economy, since oil costs affect the cost of just about everything else. On

top of that, there's global climate change.

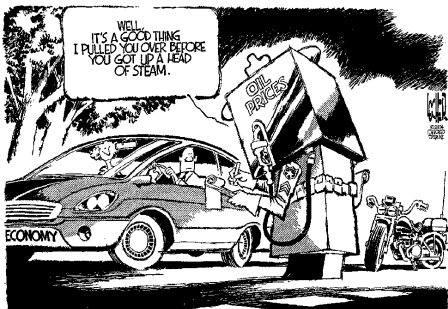
The new study, conducted by the Colorado-based Rocky Mountain Institute (funded partly by the Defense Department), suggests that we respond to high oil prices by retreating for alternative energy sources and by more efficiently using oil. Titled "Winning the Oil Endgame: American Innovation for Profits, Jobs and Security," the study's report says that in ten decades we can halve our fossil-fuel use, through such alternatives as biofuels and hydrogen.

The report even asserts that by 2050 the United States can be oil-free, save for some oil used as fuel to produce hydrogen.

That's way down the road, but many of the positive effects on national security and the economy would occur much sooner.

Amory Lovins, the Rocky Mountain Institute's director, was an alternative-energy guru in the oil-embargo days. Now he promotes carbon fiber for the bodies of "ultra light" cars, which could get 85 miles a gallon and still be safe. To raise the ball rolling, he proposes a "feedbate," a subsidy for fuel-efficient cars, raised from a tax on gasoline guzzlers.

The Pentagon is interested because it is the world's biggest oil buyer. A little effi-



ciency goes a long way in the defense budget.

Military planners also think that fuel efficiency could make the military more effective, as well as removing oil as a source of global conflicts. Says Lovins:

"Imagine, too, our moral clarity if other nations no longer assume everything the United States does is about oil."

High oil prices cause hardship. But this report should help us focus on their related opportunities.

Let Afghans' Election Day bravery end our apathy

BY MAJ. JEFFERY E. MCCLANE

Election Day, Oct. 9. No, not in the United States but in Afghanistan. The Afghan Presidential Election took place this month and I was an instrumental part in ensuring that it took place.

I was activated from the Indiana Army National Guard to active service to serve in Afghanistan (yes, we still have military forces in Afghanistan) to work as an embedded trainer with the Afghan National Army. Actually it is a great assignment and a wonderful opportunity for an officer with more than 21 years of military service, such as myself, to be able to work as a tactical adviser and mentor of another military force some 7,200 miles from my home in Noblesville, Ind.

The United States is just one of numerous countries that are working with Afghanistan to help it rebuild. Much like the man who is stuck at the bottom of a well and cannot get by himself, such is a good way to describe the current condition in Afghanistan. After a 10-year occupation of the former Soviet Union and then a 23-year civil war, this country is devastated. The United States and many other countries are joining together to help rebuild Afghanistan — to raise it up out of the ashes. That is why the military presence here is called Task Force Phoenix. I am just one member of Task Force Phoenix III. And I recently started my one-year tour working with the ANA.

In the months leading up to the Afghan presidential election there were many incidents and threats of incidents waged by the Anti-Coalition Militia. In fact, the election date was postponed twice due to the amount of violence and risk to the candidates and general populace. But thankfully the election was not postponed again and did indeed take place Oct. 9.

The role that I served was working directly with the ANA and running mounted security patrols and executing roving checkpoints that assisted in preventing freedom of movement for the ACM. This greatly reduced the threat that these enemy forces could bring to bear on the brave individuals working to help facilitate the elections.



Special to Stars and Stripes

Jeffery E. McClane, a major in the Indiana Army National Guard, is serving as an adviser and mentor to Afghanistan's army.

The election was important because it shows that the people of Afghanistan want a democratic government that can work to rebuild what once was a beautiful country. It also served to unite the brave people of Afghanistan toward one cause: to elect, by popular vote, one man and his two running mates to serve as vice presidents to

work toward making Afghanistan a great country again. This is significant since it is largely a decentralized country.

The day of the election I was on mounted patrols with the ANA as we drove the treacherous roads from one populated area to another to ensure that the roads were free of improvised explosive devices — as well as safe from enemy activity — so that the people could make their way to the designated polling stations to cast their votes.

I have twice referred to the people of Afghanistan as being brave. This is because they literally risked their lives to travel from their homes to the polling stations in order to exercise their newly found privilege of casting their vote. I heard reports about attacks that took place all across the country on polling centers by the ACM to prevent and discourage people from voting and to frighten voting staffers from carrying out their duties. But it was all in vain as the Afghan people went anyway and voted. They even had separate voting sites for women (as it is a much different culture here and women still, for the most part, are not allowed to interact freely with men). I was told by another officer that he saw one polling station just for women and the

women were coming in droves to vote. What a great day for Afghanistan!

Election results are not known at this time since the ballots have to be transported from all over the country to secret, and highly protected, ballot counting sites and the process is completely manual. But to know that I was an integral part of such a historic day in Afghanistan's history makes me proud to be here and a part of the U.S. military.

Now I ask you, how precious is the right to vote to you? In America we don't have to dodge bullets, rocket-propelled grenades or rocket attacks in order to go to cast our vote. The people of Afghanistan did and were happy to have the opportunity to do so. So I am asking all who read this: Will you ensure that you make the time to exercise your privilege to vote or will you blow it off as does the majority of the American populace?

I have been ordered to serve my country for more than a year in an effort to help Afghanistan. I would much rather be home. So I am asking you to please don't take our sacrifice in vain and throw away the opportunity to vote. Doing so only diminishes you, the men and women of the armed forces, and our great nation, the United States.

Maj. Jeffery E. McClane is serving in the infantry with the Indiana Army National Guard in Afghanistan.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



IN THE WORLD

Iran says it will suspend its nuclear activities

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI
The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said Monday it is prepared to suspend temporarily some nuclear activities, but it would not forego its right to enrich uranium.

The big three European powers reportedly intend to offer Iran this week a package of economic incentives in the hope of persuading the country to abandon uranium enrichment, a process used to produce fuel for nuclear reactors and weapons.

The move by Britain, France and Germany is designed to head off a confrontation between Iran and the U.N. nuclear agency, where the United States has been arguing that Iran has secret plans to build atomic weapons.

"From a tactical point of view, discussion on how long to continue suspension (of some nuclear activities) is negotiable," Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Hasan Rowhani, told state television Monday.

"But if the discussion is about depriving us of our legitimate right to manage the cycle of nuclear fuel, it's not negotiable. Our negotiating team is not authorized

to discuss this either with Europeans or others," Rowhani said.

He said that said any suspension of nuclear activities would have to be for "a short period of time." He did not specify what activities Iran would suspend.

Last month, the International Atomic Energy Agency unanimously passed a resolution that demands Iran freeze all work on uranium enrichment and related activities, such as uranium reprocessing and the building of centrifuges used for enrichment.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog is due to meet Nov. 25 to judge Iran's compliance. An unsatisfactory judgment could lead to Iran's file being referred to the U.N. Security Council, which has the power to impose sanctions on Iran.

Iran has already defied the IAEA resolution by continuing to build centrifuges and by converting a few tons of raw uranium into hexafluoride gas, a stage prior to enrichment. Iran has branded the IAEA resolution as illegal, and points to the fact that the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty entitles it to enrich uranium. Iran says its nuclear program is devoted entirely to the generation of electricity.

Digital fingerprinting, migrant camps top European meeting

BY ALESSANDRA RIZZO
The Associated Press

FLORENCE, Italy — In a bid to improve security, ministers from five European countries said Monday they hoped to start digital fingerprinting for passports in 2006, but they split over a German proposal to put illegal migrants in transit camps in North Africa.

Interior ministers from Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Italy held two days of informal talks in a 19th-century villa in Florence to prepare initiatives they hope will eventually be adopted throughout the entire 25-member European Union.

But they failed to overcome their own differences over Germany's proposal, backed by Italy, to set up camps in North Africa to process asylum seekers before they set out on perilous sea journeys to southern European shores.

In a statement at the end of the talks Monday morning, the ministers said they were hoping to introduce the fingerprint measure for passports issued by their countries starting in 2006.

The transit camp proposal, however, had been the focus of the meeting.

Although Spain, like Italy, is flooded with immigrants making

clandestine voyages across the Mediterranean from North Africa, it sided with France in coming down against the German idea.

"For France, it's out of the question to accept transit camps or shelters of any kind," French Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin said at a closing news conference.

Spain's interior minister, Jose Antonio Alonso, said such camps would not give humanitarian guarantees.

De Villepin said international organizations and the transit states should be involved in deciding the policy.

Italy has been concentrating its efforts lately to keep thousands of illegal migrants from reaching its shores by working with Libya, a major trading partner, whose shores, officials say, are a launching point for many of the smuggler boat runs.

Opponents of the transit camp proposal have expressed fears that bids for asylum might not be fairly handled.

France and Spain had already expressed reservations before the Florence talks.

German Interior Minister Otto Schily, who first made the transit camp proposal, said Monday that the initiative would deal with the problem "where it is born."



Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, right, talks to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, left, during a meeting on Sudan's Darfur region in Tripoli, Libya on Sunday.

Foreign aid for Darfur rejected

African leaders commend Sudan's effort in humanitarian crisis

BY KHALED AL-DEEB
The Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya — Sudan's president and four African counterparts rejected Monday any foreign intervention in Darfur, describing the bloody humanitarian crisis as an "absolute African issue."

After an overnight summit, the leaders of Chad, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and Sudan issued a statement that seemed to say they would not accept the imposition of sanctions or any other penalties on Sudan by the U.N. Security Council or Western powers.

Sudan faces the threat of U.N. sanctions as the U.N. Security Council investigates allegations leveled by the United States and humanitarian groups that the government and its allied Arab militia have committed genocide against Darfur's African people. An estimated 70,000 people have died since conflict

broke out in Sudan's western region early last year. Nearly 1.5 million people have fled their homes, tens of thousands crossing into neighboring Chad. The government denies genocide has occurred.

In their statement, the five presidents expressed approval of what they called Sudan's "efforts to improve the humanitarian situation ... its cooperation with international parties interested in human rights."

But they also said they hoped "the Sudanese government adopts measures to comply with the demands of (U.N.) Security Council's resolutions 1556 and 1564" — which demand that the government disarm all militia and restore law and order in Darfur.

The presidents said they "reject any foreign intervention from any party in this absolute African issue."

The U.N. Security Council has

said it would consider penalties such as sanctions if the Sudanese government failed to comply with its resolutions and restore peace to Darfur.

The presidents called for the respect of "Sudan's sovereignty, independence, unity and its territorial integrity."

At the outset of the talks in a Tripoli hotel, the spokesman for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said the summit aimed to prove that African leaders can solve their own problems.

"What is important is to make Sudan comply with its (international) commitments. Threats of sanctions will not solve the problem," said spokesman Magid Abdel Fattah.

Libyan Foreign Minister Abdel Rahman Shalgam said: "We are all concerned to find a solution which will not only solve the security and the political problem, but also the humanitarian problem."

Sharon: Nothing will deter Gaza plan

BY JOSEF FEEDERMAN
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Facing unrelenting criticism from Jewish settlers, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Monday nothing would deter him from pushing forward with his plan to pull out of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

Scattered fighting in Gaza, meanwhile, killed at least five Palestinian militants.

Sharon, a longtime patron of the settlements, spoke a day after holding a tense meeting with settler leaders that ended with battle lines drawn between the two sides.

Sharon pledged to put his "disengagement plan" to a parliamentary vote Oct. 25. Despite a rift in his hard-line Likud Party, he is expected to prevail with the backing of dovish opposition parties.

Sharon told reporters Monday he is required to bring his plan to

parliament and he intends to follow through, despite pressure from the settlers.

"The responsibility of managing the issues of the country, the responsibility of the future of the country, is not the concern of just one group. It is the concern of the entire nation, and this burden is placed on my shoulders, and this is how I plan to behave," he said.

Settler leaders called their Sunday meeting with their former ally "disgraceful" and pressed for a national referendum while pledging to torpedo the withdrawal.

About 8,200 settlers live in 21

Gaza settlements among 1.3 million Palestinians. Sharon decided the settlers cannot remain in the hostile, poverty-stricken seaside territory.

Sharon says his plan will increase Israel's security after four years of fighting with the Palestinians and help consolidate control over large chunks of the West Bank. The settlers accuse Sharon of caving in to Palestinian violence, warning that dismantling any settlements sets a dangerous precedent.

The settlers, as well as hard-line allies within Sharon's government, have been pushing him to hold a referendum on the withdrawal. He has rejected that, calling it a delaying tactic by his opponents.

Polls show about two-thirds of Israelis support the pullout, despite large, well-funded and publicized protests by the settlers and their backers. Sharon already has lost two separate votes within his party on his plan.



Sharon

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Best convicted

PA PHILADELPHIA — A man charged with shooting at a group of children following a snowball fight was convicted of attempted murder and other offenses.

Police said Joseph Best, 34, fired the shots into a crowd in West Philadelphia in February 2003 because he was angry that his daughter had been struck in the head by a snowball. Ten-year-old Ebony Smith was wounded in the shooting and spent two months in the hospital.

Jurors convicted Best of attempted murder, aggravated assault and weapons offenses. He will be sentenced in December. Best's fiancée, Cynthia Powell, 38, was acquitted of all charges other than weapons offenses.

"We wanted the person who pulled the trigger, Joseph Best," said Carol Smith, Ebony's mother, "and we got him."

Disastrous mistake

GA CORDELE — There was no "Day After Tomorrow" for Charles Alton Adams' mobile home, which the south Georgia man told police he set on fire after watching the disaster movie and drinking beer.

Adams, 32, walked into the Crisp County Law Enforcement Center and told deputies he had burned down the mobile home.

He told deputies that after watching "The Day After Tomorrow," a special-effects extravaganza depicting deadly natural disasters caused by global warming, and drinking nine or 10 beers, he decided to set fire to pillows on his bed.

When asked why, Crisp County Sheriff Donnie Haralson said, "I have asked that question myself.... The whole thing just doesn't really make sense."

Haralson said Adams was being charged with arson. He remained jailed as family members attempted to raise money for his bond.

Firefighter gets the boot

TX FORT WORTH — A veteran firefighter from the Southlake Department of Public Safety has been fired for supervising the hosing down of the Southlake Carroll band and color guard, injuring 13 students.

Also, a firefighter was suspended without pay for 120 days and a fire captain was given a one-day suspension without pay for involvement in the Aug. 4 event in the parking lot of Carroll High School.

Fire Lt. Jeff Powell, a 14-year veteran, was fired.

An internal investigation showed the three employees violated department safety policies. At times, the students were hit directly by the water; it was not directed over their heads, according to Southlake reports.

The band and color guard were hosed down as part of a spirit-motivating exercise.

Gun turned in

CA LOS ANGELES — The head of the police department's counterterrorism bureau has turned in the unlicensed handgun that airport screeners found in his carry-on luggage last month.

"He did it voluntarily," Sgt.



Catherine Plows, a police spokeswoman, said. "He just thought there was a lot of unnecessary press about it when there didn't need to be."

The police department had issued John Miller the .38-caliber Smith & Wesson, but it was never registered because of a paperwork glitch, officials said.

Miller, an ABC-TV reporter before he was hired for the security job, was off duty and traveling to New York to tape a farewell message for Barbara Walters, the retiring former "20/20" co-host, when airport officials discovered the gun.

He also turned in a second, licensed handgun and a sport utility vehicle equipped with a siren and emergency lights. Both were issued by the police department.

Democrats win in court

NH CONCORD — Democrats won a court victory allowing them to further investigate the illegal jamming of Democratic phone lines on Election Day 2002. The party planned, through depositions, to try to compel state Republican officials to disclose whether higher-level GOP operatives were involved in the jamming, state Democrats' Chairwoman Kathy Sullivan said.

"We want to know the names of

everybody involved," she said.

"We want to know where the money came from."

The jamming involved computer-generated calls to Democratic lines and one operated by the non-partisan Manchester firefighters' union, set up for voters who needed rides to the polls. More than 800 hang-up calls tied up phones for about 1½ hours.

The calls sparked a federal investigation that led former state GOP executive director Chuck McGee to plead guilty in July. He admitted paying \$15,600 to a Virginia telemarketing company that hired another business to call a handful of Democratic offices around the state.

Car safety questioned

IL BELLEVILLE — A jury in the first class-action lawsuit filed over the safety of Ford's Crown Victoria police cruisers ruled that the cars are safe, but a judge must now decide if the automaker violated state consumer fraud laws.

Class-action lawsuits are pending in at least 12 states over the Crown Victoria Police Interceptor, a specially built police cruiser that accounts for the majority of police cars on U.S. streets.

Since 1983, at least 15 officers nationwide have died in fiery crashes after their Crown Victorias were rear-ended — including one in Texas last month. Ford Motor Co. contends the deaths reflect officers' risky work rather than a design flaw.

Shooting investigation

VA NEWPORT NEWS — Police were investigating an incident in which a man in a car was shot and killed by officers after one officer was pinned between the man's car and a parked vehicle.

Police spokesman Lou Thurston said three officers on bicycles who had approached the car in the 900 block of 27th Street issued a distress call.

The man in the car, whose identity was not available, was shot after he attempted to run down one officer, Thurston said.

The man was pronounced dead at the scene with a gunshot wound to the torso. His body was sent to the medical examiner's office in Norfolk.

Guilty plea in porn case

VT BRATTLEBORO — A Rockingham man could go to prison for up to 20 years after he pleaded guilty to child pornography charges in federal court.

Ronald E. Frohock, 52, had been set to go to trial on the charges before he accepted a plea agreement. Under the agreement, Darrow agreed to dismiss 10 additional indictments against Frohock for the distribution of child pornography.

"There is absolutely no question about the ages of the children depicted," prosecutor William Darrow said in court documents.

"They were many years under the age of 18."

Sentencing is set for January. U.S. District Court Judge J. Garvan Murtha could hand Frohock a sentence of up to 20 years imprisonment. Based on several prior sex offense convictions in New Hampshire, Frohock will have to spend a minimum sentence of 10 years incarcerated.



Fishy snapshot

Donald Lamkin, 63, of Corpus Christi, Texas, sits inside a giant Fiberglas shark's head as he urges fairgoers to pay to have their photo made inside the shark's jaws during opening night of the 2004 South Texas State Fair in Beaumont, Texas.



Park fun

Fraternal twins Max, left, and Harry Evans, 17 months, fill a nutshell with water from the water fountain at Triangle Park in Birmingham, Ala.



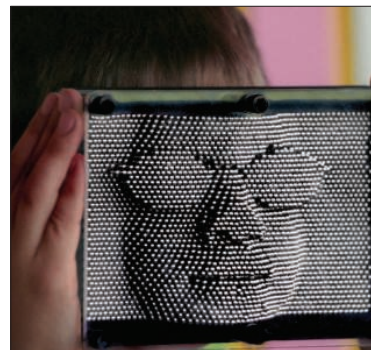
Street chitchat

Lincoln Elementary School crossing guard Amy Ramirez talks to sixth-graders, left, Eva Betancourt, 11, Damaris Morene, 11, and first-grader Joanna Villagran, 6, before they cross Center Street in Mesa, Ariz.



Sweet rewards

Louisiana State University mass communications major Casey Gioia, 17, from New Orleans, La., concentrates as she places another Oreo cookie on her stack at the Highland Cafeteria on campus in Baton Rouge, La. She successfully stacked 48 of the cookies before it collapsed on the 49th. Contestants competed for top prize of an Oreo cookie jar.



Science is fun

Aidan Ziegler-Hansen, 9, tries out a Pin Art offered at the Science Factory store in Eugene, Ore. Hansen is part of the after-school science club at the Science Factory, which just started selling toys.



Church move

Marble Lutheran Church's 100-mile journey comes to an end as the church arrives at the Shores of St. Andrew Camp in New London, Minn.

Ferry's future unknown

ME PORTLAND — The cruise ferry Scotia Prince makes its last overnight voyage of the season from Portland to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, but its future after that is uncertain.

Despite \$10 million spent on improvements to the ship, ridership dropped by 23 percent this year, according to Scotia Prince Cruises, which plans to keep the vessel in Portland over the winter while its owners decide whether to continue operations next year.

The 35-year-old ferry operation faces problems that go beyond the drop in business.

It could be getting competition from Bay Ferries Ltd., operator of The Cat, the high-speed ferry which now runs between Bar Harbor and Nova Scotia, and is hoping to expand to Portland.

Police officer arrested

HI HONOLULU — A former Honolulu police officer is arrested during a drug raid in Kalihi.

The 61-year-old man and three others are in the bust face various drug charges.

Police seized drugs, cash, chemicals to make crystal methamphetamine and a firearm from the home on Kamehameha IV Road.

In 1992, the then-officer was convicted of criminal conspiracy and sentenced to 10 years in prison for his involvement in five Hawaii Kai-area burglaries.

He provided confidential information he received in his capacity as a police officer and passed it on to another man who burglarized the homes.

Fire cause undetermined

MS JACKSON — Federal officials have completed their investigation of a fraternity house fire that killed three students at the University of Mississippi, including one from Virginia, but they were unable to pinpoint the cause.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives issued a report saying the cause of the blaze remains "undetermined."

The report said the fire that killed Howard Stone, 19, of Martinsville, Va., William Townsend, 19, of Clarksville, and Jordan Williams, 20, of Atlanta, erupted early Aug. 27 in a basement bedroom of the Alpha Tau Omega house. Twenty-three students and a house mother escaped the fire at the two-story, brick-and-wood frame building.

ATF investigators said they found no evidence of foul play, and no evidence that electrical appliances near the fire's origin had failed.

Project nearly complete

ME PORTLAND — Maine's largest public works project in decades, the \$135 million widening of the Maine Turnpike, is just about finished.

The Maine Turnpike Authority will mark the occasion by painting a symbolic "final stripe" and opening the new lane on the last remaining section of the state's busiest highway: the six-mile stretch between Biddeford and Kennebunk.

Some minor landscaping and painting may continue into November, but the paving and major construction are complete.

The project took five years and came in on time and \$2 million under budget.

"You want to be joyful the project is over, but in many ways you kind of hate to see it go because it has gone so well," said Maine Turnpike Authority spokesman Dan Paradee.

Morning fire kills five

KS OLATHE — A pre-dawn house fire killed five members of a family in northeastern Kansas.

Olathe Fire Department spokesman Mike Hall said the fire broke out in the early morning. A son who survived the blaze ran to a neighbor's home and called 911, Hall said.

The victims were identified as Matthew and Rebecca Orr, both 46, and three of their children — Benjamin Orr, 18; Jeremiah Orr, 16; and Kyle Orr, 14. A seventh family member, a college student, was not home when the fire broke out.

Firefighters found four people dead inside the home, and the fifth victim died later at a hospital, Hall said. The son who survived suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was trying to help the victims when firefighters arrived.

A downtown Wal-Mart?

VT ST. ALBANS — The Preservation Trust of Vermont is hoping Wal-Mart Stores Inc. will move the store it has planned for the edge of the community to the city's downtown.

Preservation Trust Executive Director Paul Bruhn said he hoped Wal-Mart officials would remember his group's idea if the state or town denies approval for the store outside the city in the town of St. Albans.

Wal-Marts built in rural areas, like the one planned for U.S. 7, can cause sprawl as other national retailers cluster nearby, conservation groups say. Building downtown limits sprawl, leaving green pastures, cornfields and the like untouched.

Wal-Mart has already brushed off a similar recommendation made by the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Shrimp worker shortage

TX BROWNSVILLE — The federal aid government's cap on temporary foreign workers is forcing some shrimp boats to remain idle as shrimpers try to find crews, fishermen say.

Dolby Linwood's two boats often stay docked because he can't find qualified workers for the trips which often take between 30-50 days, a journey few local workers are willing to make, he said.

"We weren't able to get any [H2-B visas] for this year," Linwood said. "You can't find people here who are dependable. The locals take a trip and they don't want to go back." Linwood has relied in Mexican and Nicaraguan fishermen.

Chris Bentley, a spokesman for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Washington, said plenty of H2-B visas are available for 2005. Applications became available Oct. 1. However, visas can take a minimum of two months to issue for the regular \$185 fee, Bentley said.

Stories and photos from wire services.



Go, fish

Shark Attack, driven by Tyler Wallace, left, races Seafood Chef, driven by Daniel Cardenas, during Petersburg, Alaska's Humpy 500 go-kart races. The annual go-kart race celebrates the end of the salmon canning season on Niktoof Island.

FACES

Love trying to settle legal fees dispute

Rocker Courtney Love's attorneys and a prominent law firm have agreed to try settling a dispute over legal fees out of court.

Superior Court Judge Gerald Rosenberg gave Love's lawyers and Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP until Feb. 5 to reach a settlement.

The two sides must report back on any agreement on Feb. 9, said Dane Gambill, a courtroom assistant. If no agreement is reached, the judge could then set a trial date.

Last November, the firm sued Love. Hole band mate Eric Erlandson and a company owns the recording services of the band's members over claims of unpaid lawyer fees. The firm has represented Love in contract matters.

Love, the widow of Nirvana singer Kurt Cobain, was formerly the lead singer of Hole. She had to delay a concert tour with her new band this year because of various legal problems.

This month, Love has hosted a weekly radio show on KDLT/KDLE-FM on which she plays recordings from her own collection as well as from the station's archives. The show runs through the end of October.

Jesse Jackson's birthday gets political

The Rev. Jesse Jackson celebrated his election-themed 63rd birthday party at a swank hotel, surrounded by California Democratic leaders and celebrity activists.

"It is, at once, my 63rd birthday and it is also mobilizing friends for a 19-day countdown to the Nov. 2 election," he said during a press conference before the party Thursday at the Beverly Hilton hotel.

Jackson urged people to get out and work "to stop the schemes of voter suppression," referring to allegations by federal civil rights monitors that the ballots of black Florida voters in 2000 were disproportionately tossed out due to faulty machinery and ballot problems.

Guests at the party included film maker Michael Moore, activist actor Mike Farrell, former Gov. Gray Davis and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters.



Jackson

Judge wants Britney's explanation

A federal judge has ordered Britney Spears to explain why she failed to respond to a pre-emptive lawsuit filed by a diet supplement maker, who claims the pop star's lawyers threatened to sue for using her image without permission in marketing.

The complaint originated in a moment of clumsiness, when Spears was spinning a bottle of diet supplement Zantrex-3 at London's Heathrow airport in October 2003 and scrambling to pick up the pills.

The fumble was captured by a flock of paparazzi, and London's Daily Express devoted a whole page to the incident.

A trio of Utah companies behind the supplement capitalized on the accident by invoking Spears' advertising, but they claimed Spears' lawyers ordered them to stop citing the episode or they would be sued.

Zeller Laboratories LLC, DG Enterprises and Zeller LLC are asking a federal judge to declare they have violated no federal or state law with their marketing practices.



Spears

Prince music video creates controversy

The musician Prince is drawing fire for a new video that portrays an Arab-American girl envisioning herself blowing up an airport.

The video for the song "Cinnamon Girl" shows the girl, played by 14-year-old Oscar nominee Keisha Castle-Hughes of the movie "Whale Rider," facing harassment from schoolmates and witnessing racism in the wake of an attack that mirrors 9/11.

Steve Silberfarb, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota, said he applauds the anti-harassment message, but found a dream sequence in which the girl detonates a bomb at an airport disturbing.

Prince turned down an interview request through his Los Angeles-based publicist, Ronnie Lippin, who said the entertainer's goal was to provoke a discussion about the issues raised in the video. "If people are reacting with concern, I think the conversation is starting," she said.

Stories and photos from wire services



Moviemakers watch a free showing of Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" on a field in Crawford, Texas. President Bush's supporters also gathered to protest the showing of the movie.

AP photos

Film makers bring politics to the screen

Editor's note: Arts and entertainment have long converged with politics. But this year, something different is in the air — and on movie screens, in bookstores, on the radio, and everywhere else media is consumed. This is the second part of the six-part series.

BY DAVID GERMAIN
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The vote is in. Political matters have become viable candidates on the big screen, with filmmakers and audiences roused by curiosity, patriotism or indignation to explore critical issues of the times.

Usually regarded to Sunday morning TV roundtables, current events and political change have become as commonplace in theaters as presidential wannabes in Iowa early in an election year.

Michael Moore's President Bush-bashing "Fahrenheit 9/11" has led the way, but dozens of other documentaries and a handful of dramatized films have arisen in the aftermaths of the 2000 election mess, the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the war on terrorism.

Moviemakers have made mini-hits out of such theatrical releases as "Control Room," an examination of Arab TV network Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iraq war, and "The Fog of War," Errol Morris' Academy Award-winning compendium of Robert S. McNamara's insights on modern history and combat.

Political documentaries such as "Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election," "Uncovered: The War on Iraq" and "Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism" have sold briskly on DVD.

"The voting public is energized," Moore said last summer, after "Fahrenheit 9/11" became the first documentary to top \$100 million at the domestic box office. "They are anxious to discuss politics, and I think since September 11, the American people have wanted to find out more of what's going on in the world."

Filmmakers and distributors have rushed in to satisfy that inquisitiveness.

Other issue-driven films newly released on film or DVD include "Horns and Halos," chronicling the saga of J.H. Hatfield's biography of President Bush ("Fortunate Son"), "Going Upriver: The Long War of John Kerry" and "Brothers in Arms," which explore the Democratic presidential candidate's Vietnam record and his subsequent stand against the war. "The Yes Men," following two anti-corporate pranksters posing as World Trade Organization representatives; "The Hunting of the President," examining efforts by Bill Clinton's enemies to discredit his administration; and "The War Room," the documentary hit about Clinton's 1992 campaign.

"I think this is the high-water mark for political filmmaking, but I don't think it's the end of the rising tide," said filmmaker Steve Rosenbaum, who is making "Inside the Bubble," a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the Kerry campaign.

"Under Clinton, we went through eight years in which things were kind of OK, the economy was going great, with the dot-com thing, everybody was going to be a millionaire. Now, we're on the back of that. People are waking up, wondering, 'Where the hell is Sudan? Where is the Gaza

Strip? What did we do in Afghanistan?'

That sense of bewilderment people have been feeling leaves intelligent people thinking.

Documentary directors tend to be left-leaning people, so the rush of political films reflects that liberal bent. But some films have delved into the conservative side or attempted to counter liberal viewpoints, among them "Bush's Brain," a portrait of the president's chief adviser, Karl Rove; "George W. Bush: Faith in the White House"; and two documentaries rebutting Moore's work, "Michael Moore Hates America" and "Fahrenheit 9/11."

To an extent, the surge in political interest has spilled over to fictional films. "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone's "Team America: World Police" parodies the U.S. war on terror using a cast of puppets. Denzel Washington starred in last summer's remake of the assassination thriller "The Manchurian Candidate," which used the Persian Gulf War as the root for a plot to usurp the White House. Robert Redford is developing a sequel to his 1972 political satire "The Candidate." As with other forms of independent filmmaking, digital technology has helped swell the ranks of documentary directors.

What used to be a prohibitively expensive endeavor for cameras, lighting and film stock now can be undertaken by anyone with an idea and a few thousand dollars for a digital camera.

Commercial success of Moore's "Bowling for Columbine" and other documentary hits have broadened audience and distributor interest in nonfiction films in general.

Though audiences have embraced political films, the movie's potential to influence the elections is uncertain.



Giving away copies of his books and films on Oct. 1, Moore greets some members of the audience at Metropolitan Park in Jacksonville, Fla.

Toru Tsuzuki's spa added white dyes to some of its baths to simulate the milky color of Shirahone's natural springs. "We have sinned," he said. Several springs had mysteriously begun losing their coveted natural cream color during the 1990s.

The Washington Post



Living for business: Japan's hot springs come clean

Spa owners added artificial white dye when many springs started clearing up in the '90s

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA
The Washington Post

SHIRAHONE, Japan — The milk-hued hot springs of Shirahone have for a thousand years lured legions of stressed-out Japanese, who traversed mountain passes and paid small fortunes to wash away their troubles in the steaming thermal baths.

But in a scandal that has precipitated a nationwide crisis of confidence in Japan's beloved onsen, or hot spring resorts, a national magazine this summer reported that spa owners were secretly con-

"Perhaps it is not something a foreigner can fully understand, but we know how much the Japanese love hot springs and how much they feel betrayed by us."

Toru Tsuzuki
Former onsen
general manager

the nation's treasured 22,000 hot springs for evidence of other cheats. Three months of investigations and at least one police raid later, officials have uncovered fraud at scores of onsen nationwide.

The deception seen bottomless. Some proprietors even clandestinely boiled tap water and passed it off as coming from Ja-

pan's natural springs. The tainted hot springs in at least 20 resort towns include several whose waters had been celebrated for centuries in epic poems, fables and woodblock prints.

Worse, the disclosures have stained one of the most precious and highly developed rituals of Japanese culture — group bathing. The affronts had generated scathing newspaper editorials and dominated television news. Meanwhile, the mayor of Shirahone resigned in dismay.

More than reputations are at stake. Some fear that the resulting loss of tourism revenue may cripple the rural economies of dozens of towns just as Japan is emerging from a 13-year economic slump.

Already, fuming Japanese are staying away from several of the resort villages involved, tourism officials and business owners reported.

"We have sinned," said Toru Tsuzuki, son of the former mayor of Shirahone and general manager of an onsen that took part in the play.

"Perhaps it is not something a foreigner can fully understand, but we know how much the Japanese love hot springs and how much they feel betrayed by us."

For centuries, onsen have ranked among the most beloved aspects of Japanese life for foreigners, whom the Japanese accuse of being unable to take the heat. Dave Barry, the famed

humor columnist of the Miami Herald, once wrote that the water temperature preferred by the locals appeared somewhere in the neighborhood of "17,000 degrees Fahrenheit."

Bathing is frequently viewed as an act of group bonding. Even at home, young families — including at least one parent and small children — bathe together, relaxing and sharing the news of the day while submerged in a steaming tub.

The Japanese insist that their springs, naturally heated by one of the most volcanically active geographies on Earth, can ease the pain of everything from arthritis to skin disease, as well as an especially bad day at the office.

Hot spring spas escaped Japan's economic downturn, which began in 1991. The number of onsen increased 20 percent in a decade, evolving into the single biggest slice of Japan's huge domestic tourism industry, according to government statistics. Today, more Japanese towns rely on onsen-based tourism than on car factories for their financial livelihoods.

Activist groups have set out to tighten Japan's hot springs laws and force thermal spas to post their ingredients, both natural and artificial. "This fraud has undermined the public trust, and the economic and emotional damage to the nation will take some time to overcome," said Tomino Hirano, head of a spa watchdog group and a noted travel writer.

The scandal has cast a pall on Shirahone's townspeople, most of whom lowered their heads and spoke softly when asked about the situation.

"We know it will take some time, but we hope people will give us another chance," noddle shop owner Toshio Saito said.

Special correspondents Akiko Yamamoto and Sachiko Sakamoto contributed to this report.

Divorce rates on the rise in China

Some splits only take an hour and cost about \$1

BY TIM JOHNSON
Knight Ridder Newspapers

SHANGHAI, China — As incomes rise and social mobility increases, growing numbers of urban Chinese couples are getting divorced.

It's only been since Oct. 1, 2003, that divorce has been relatively easy. Before that, couples needed workplace supervisors' approval to divorce, and they endured meddling attempts at mediation, either on the job or by a Communist Party-appointed neighborhood busybody.

Now, if both parties work out their own terms for dividing property, child custody and debt settlement, the paperwork for a divorce can be done in about an hour. The cost is \$1.10. No forced mediation occurs.

"Everywhere in China, no matter how small the city, divorce is

more common. A lot of people now understand that divorce is not a bad thing," said Shu Xin, who has advised couples since the late 1990s and bills himself as China's first marriage counselor.

It's not just divorces that are more frequent. So are cohabitation among young adults, out-of-wedlock love affairs and paternity tests.

As in many parts of the world, extramarital affairs are the main cause for divorce. A survey earlier this year at the Marriage Crisis Service Center in the southern city of Chongqing found that a spouse having an affair led to 70 percent of divorces.

Shu said 4 out of 5 of the 1,800 clients his firm has offered services to wanted a divorce because a spouse had an affair.

The government hasn't divulged figures for divorce rates this year.



KRT

Shu Xin, a marriage counselor in Shanghai, holds a Chinese language newspaper carrying his newspaper column for those with troubled marriages. China's divorce rate is rising as the nation modernizes.

Russian prison inmates struggle with health

MOSCOW — More than 80 percent of Russia's prison inmates have health problems, Russian news agencies reported Friday, quoting the country's human rights ombudsman calling the situation catastrophic.

Of the 615,000 people currently in prisons in the nation of 144 million, nearly 500,000 have some kind of illness, the Interfax news agency quoted Justice Ministry spokesman Oleg Filimonov as saying.

Burglar suspect strangled

DUBLIN, Ireland — A suspected burglar accidentally strangled himself while trying to break into a house in the southwest Irish town of Traill, police said Monday.

Police said the homeowner discovered the body of a man Sunday afternoon hanging from the inside frame of a bathroom window.

The victim appeared, they said, to have been standing on a lawn-mower while trying to break in when he slipped off — and his sweater caught on a hook, choking him.

Robbery scene too real

OSLO, Norway — An amateur film crew might deserve acclaim for the authenticity of its robbery scene, although it won't be coming from its unwilling extras, the Oslo police.

The filmmakers rented a downtown Oslo bar, set up their lighting and sent in the actors — their faces covered in balaclavas and wearing realistic but fake weapons — on Sunday.

It didn't take long before the actors found themselves facing real police officers with real weapons, making national news on Monday.

The team from K-film, Norway's oldest amateur film club, was making a short movie called "Uncertain."

A passer-by saw the filming, but didn't realize it was fake and called the police.

From The Associated Press

Horoscope

The sun and Saturn have a heated exchange, and there's a choice to be made. Do we let our past experience dictate our future actions? Or do we wash the slate clean and try being someone else in the moment of decision — take the old leap of faith? Both roads can lead somewhere good if we resolve to keep ethics in line and honor intact.

Joyce Jillson



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(October 19): You're on top of the world this year. Your buoyant attitude attracts winners to you — people who can help you earn more money as well as bring you into social circles that are a positive influence on your personal development. Family connections and inherited talents are your key to success through the rest of the fall.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your true success will come from the goodness of your character, so do things to build it. Keep your word even after you realize that it's more than you can comfortably do. Being uncomfortable is better than being flaky.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You'll be among the top performers at work — an honor and a responsibility. You may even spend a decent amount of time wondering why you do what you do. Look deeper into your value system to find the answer.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): Cultivate independence. Whether it's deciding where to go this weekend instead of relying on a partner to make plans for you or fixing the printer when the paper gets jammed, it will feel fabulous to accomplish things on your own.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Beware of fantasy love. It may feel temporarily wonderful to have someone so infatuated with you, but it usually gets old fast. After all, who wants the responsibility of making someone else's life decisions?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Relationships add to your life in unexpected and delightful ways. Make note of the graciousness you come upon so you can later acknowledge it well.

Anticipate a slight (and fleeting) dip in your confidence this evening.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You'll be considering your friendships very carefully. After all, you treat the ones you love so well, you simply don't deserve to be subjected to someone's using behavior. Try not to take others' actions too personally.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Aim for what you want. You're incredibly secure now. Beware of people who bother you with their "temporary" problems — all the time. Tonight, do more than you were asked to do.

You'll win the heart of someone worthy!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): It's not quite time to lay down the law in a relationship, ask for a raise or put down the payment on that new car. But the research you do will help you immensely when it is that time — and you won't have long to wait!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You're filled with bravado — like an invincible 8-year-old who doesn't yet know enough about the world's limitations (and therefore is spared by many of them). You make fairly sound decisions when you shoot from the hip.

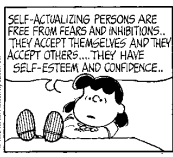
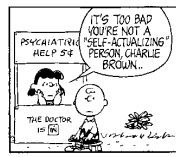
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): People in your midst have earned a pat on the back, and you're just the one to give it. Have no ulterior motives. Delight in the good news of family and friends, even though you're feeling as competitive as it gets.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You'll stumble onto an endeavor that could turn into something you're passionate about. For this reason, you may be willing to start at the bottom. But you may not have to. Investigate options before saying "yes" too quickly.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Dominating people are part of the equation at work. It's probably easier to let them have their little show of authority and then do whatever you want since these folks care more about getting attention than about being right.

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



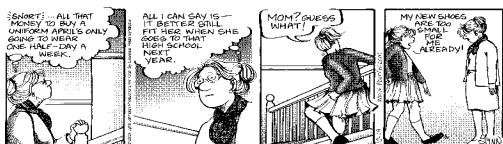
Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



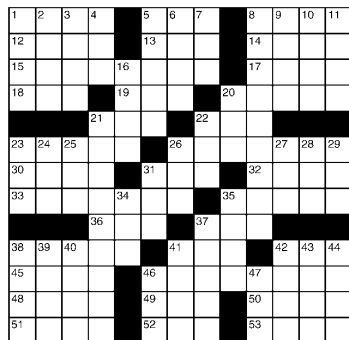
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Coffee
- 5 Coll. transcript no.
- 8 Hide in the hand
- 12 MP's quarry
- 13 Starlet
- 14 Pennsylvania port
- 15 NBC
- 17 Author James
- 18 Thread receiver
- 19 Hostel
- 20 Tonto's horse
- 21 Comprehend
- 22 "Humbly"
- 23 Emotion, when "struck"
- 26 Navigation device
- 30 Subtle
- 31 Lassi, for one
- 32 Nothing (Fr.)
- 33 Baffle
- 35 Chartres chapeau
- 36 Sushi-bar offering
- 37 Weeding tool
- 38 Need badly
- 41 Emulate Johnny
- 42 Peculiar
- 43 Stereo hookup
- 46 Emblem of America
- 48 "The Good Earth" heroine
- 49 Payable
- 50 Calm before the storm
- 51 "The Way We —"
- 52 Moverover
- 53 Gilligan's home

Down

- 1 Green mineral
- 2 Vacationing
- 3 November
- 4 Brewery product
- 5 One of the 1,000 points of light?
- 6 Ivy League team
- 7 Citic cooler
- 8 Atlanta street
- 9 Jason's craft
- 10 Stead
- 11 Bump into
- 16 Committed
- 17 perjury
- 20 Clinton's instrument
- 21 Gossip source
- 22 Plead
- 23 Upper limit
- 24 Shade
- 25 Bobby of hockey fame
- 26 Fenway team, for short
- 27 Melody
- 28 Born
- 29 Stick with a kick
- 31 Benicio — Toro
- 34 Grant foe
- 35 Seek strikes
- 37 Inclined in wishful thinking
- 38 Grub
- 39 Anger
- 40 Some-where out there
- 41 Made cotton candy
- 42 Comic-strip penguin
- 43 Picking herb
- 44 Drop a line?
- 46 Oklahoma city
- 47 Inventor Whitney

Answer to Previous Puzzle



10-19

CRYPTOQUIP

ND Z OZSRZPUU NA
DNSMNSR NF KZPM FU
YJVQ. AKUJXM KL YJAF

FZOL AUVL XLZQNSR ONXXA?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AQUATIC SUPERHERO
THAT IS QUITE ADEPT AT MAKING QUACKING
NOISES: EIDER-MAN!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals O

USC, Miami are 1-2 in first BCS rankings

Oklahoma, No. 2 in both 'human' polls, is No. 5 in computer score

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

Southern California took the top spot Monday in the season's first Bowl Championship Series standings, and surprisingly Miami is ahead of Oklahoma in a close race for the second spot.

Oklahoma is No. 2 behind USC in both The Associated Press Top 25 and coaches poll. Put in place after last season's split national championship, the new BCS formula relies more on the human polls than ever before.

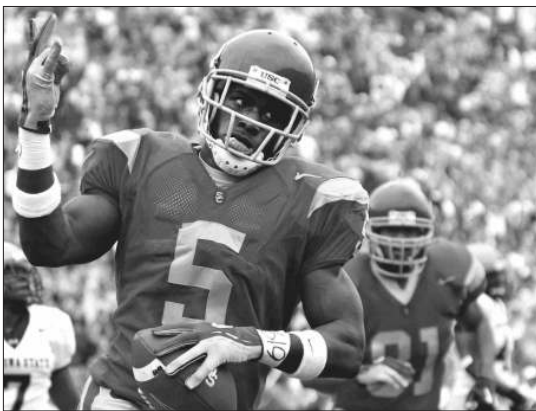
"I think it's obviously very early. It's important that there not be an overreaction to this poll," BCS coordinator and Big 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg said.

Still, even Weiberg was taken aback by Miami's position ahead of Oklahoma.

"I think I was a little surprised, to tell you the truth," he said.

The AP and coaches polls each count for one-third of a team's total score. The other third is compiled from six computer rankings, and that's where Miami made up the difference over the Sooners. The Hurricanes are ranked fourth in the AP media poll and third in the coaches poll, but are second in the computer rankings.

Oklahoma, which benefited



Reggie Bush scores a touchdown in USC's 45-7 rout of Arizona State on Saturday, an outcome that helped the top-ranked Trojans take a solid lead in the first Bowl Championship Series rankings of the season.

from the old system last season, was fifth in the computer rankings. Each team's highest and lowest computer ranking is tossed out and the remaining four are averaged.

Weiberg said that Oklahoma was probably hurt in the computer rankings by having played only one road game.

"Several of them use a home-and-away factor in their for-

mula so I think it has some influence, yes," he said.

Oklahoma has one victory over a ranked team (Texas), while Miami has two (Florida State and Louisville), which also sways computer rankings, Weiberg said.

The Orange Bowl will host the top two teams in the final BCS standings on Jan. 4 for the national title.

USC, No. 1 in each of the major

polls all season, has a big lead in the BCS with a score of .9912 out of a possible 1.000. Miami's score is .9187, Oklahoma's .9161.

Auburn is fourth (.9036) and Florida State fifth (.8072). The Seminoles, with one loss, are ahead of unbeaten Wisconsin (.7255) and Utah (.7251).

The Jets, ranked ninth in the AP poll and 10th in the ESPN/USA Today poll, are in po-

sition to become the first team from outside the six major conferences to earn a bid to one of the four big-ticket BCS games.

The champions from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Big East, Pac-10 and Southeastern Conference make up six of the eight teams in the four BCS games — the Orange, Sugar, Rose and Fiesta bowls. The other two spots go to wild-card teams.

Finishing in the top six in the BCS standings also guarantees a team a BCS bowl bid. A top-12 ranking in the final BCS standings is necessary to be eligible for one of the wild-card spots.

Utah plays in the Mountain West Conference and has a 3-0 record this season against teams ranked No. 1 in the BCS.

Boise State, the other unbeaten team from a mid-major conference, was 14th in the first BCS standings.

The BCS changed its formula for determining which teams play for the national title after last season, when USC finished the regular season ranked No. 1 in both polls, but third in the BCS standings and was left out of the title game.

Oklahoma reached the title game last season because of flaws in the old BCS formula. The Sooners lost the Big 12 title game and dropped to No. 3 in the major polls, but still finished first in the BCS standings. They were beaten in the Sugar Bowl by LSU, which mandated a vote of No. 1 in the coaches poll. USC ended up No. 1 in the media poll.

Under the system in place this season, LSU and USC would have played in the Sugar Bowl last season.



Ohio State's Mike Kudla (57) looks at the scoreboard as he can't believe that the Buckeyes are on the short end of a 33-7 score against resurgent Iowa.

After Iowa rout, Ohio State headed south

BY CHUCK SCHOFFNER

The Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa — One month ago, Ohio State was winning and Iowa was reeling.

Oh, how things have changed. Ohio State, once 3-0 and ranked seventh nationally, is 0-3 in the Big Ten and no longer in the Top 25 after a 33-7 loss at Iowa on Saturday — its worst record in the league in 16 years.

Iowa is getting better by the week and looks nothing like the overmatched team that lost to Arizona State 44-7 on Sept. 18. The Hawkeyes (4-2, 2-1 Big Ten) might not be of championship caliber, but are certainly good enough to be a factor in the conference race.

On Sunday, they replaced Ohio State at No. 25 in The Associated Press poll.

"We're going in the right direction," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said.

Ferentz hesitates to say the Arizona State win was good for his team, but it did force the Hawkeyes to refocus. They played better in a 30-17 loss at Michigan the following week and

beat Michigan State and Ohio State by a combined 71-23.

"There are two ways to go when you do that," Ferentz said. "You can either be realistic and make sure you're determined to change what took place or you can stay on the ground. Our guys traditionally have gotten back up and gone back and to work and I think that's what we've done."

Ohio State (3-3) faces the same sort of challenge because the Buckeyes most certainly are down. Their ineptitude on offense reached a new low Saturday and the defense had no answer for Iowa quarterback Drew Tate, who threw for 331 yards and three touchdowns and ran for a score.

Who could have imagined an Ohio State team rushing for only 27 yards? But that's all the Buckeyes managed, as well as losing two fumbles to set up 10 Iowa points. Ohio State's only decent drive in the first half ended with an interception in the end zone.

It took Troy Smith's 23-yard touchdown pass to Rory Nicolls with 2:19 left to keep Ohio State from being shut out for the first time since a 28-0 loss to Michigan

in 1993. Ohio State totaled just 177 yards, 73 coming on that last drive.

"I don't know if I would say that we're doing anything well," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "I think the statistics can point to that or a gut feeling can point to that."

Iowa's improvement has paralleled the maturation of Tate, a sophomore in his first season as the starter. He has bounced back from a miserable outing at Arizona State — 8-for-19 for 44 yards — to become the focal point of the Hawkeyes' offense.

In three Big Ten games, he has completed 70 percent of his passes for 941 yards and six touchdowns. Tate also has shown an ability to scramble out of trouble and throw on the run. On an 11-yard touchdown pass to Clinton Solomon on Saturday, the right-handed quarterback was rolling left and threw a perfect strike across his body.

"The more I play, the better I see things," Tate said. "I've even started changing the protection. I don't think that's been done around here for a while."

Tressel changed quarterbacks

after starter Justin Zwick fumbled on the second play of the third quarter, setting up an Iowa touchdown that made it 17-0. Zwick got hit on the shoulder in the first half and Tressel said he wasn't sure how well he could throw.

Smith was hardly an immediate spark, guiding the Buckeyes to only 15 yards in five possessions before leading the late drive.

"He did a couple of good things, obviously, on that last drive," Tressel said. "He did the things you need to do to move the ball. I thought he went in and did some pretty good things."

Tressel has a week to decide if Smith did enough to warrant more time Saturday at home against Indiana (2-4, 0-3). Ohio State hasn't lost to Indiana since 1988, but such streaks don't seem to matter anymore. The Buckeyes had not lost at Iowa since 1983 and they had a 24-game winning streak against Northwestern broken two weeks ago.

"We are trying to get it done. We just need to keep working at it," tight end Ryan Hamby said. "Nobody is going to give up. We will just keep plugging away."

Boston averts sweep

Ortiz's home run in 12th wins it; Yankees' ALCS lead is cut to 3-1

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Early in the morning, when most fans usually are tucked in bed, David Ortiz set off a frenzy at Fenway Park that gave the Boston Red Sox a shot at pulling off the greatest comeback ever.

The Red Sox were down to their last three outs of the season, close to extinction. Then Boston rallied against Mariano Rivera, the New York Yankees and decades of disappointment.

Bill Mueller singled home the tying run off Rivera in the ninth inning and Ortiz punched into the right-field bullpen against Paul Quantrill in the 12th, giving Boston an exhilarating and exhausting 6-4 victory. The Red Sox avoided a sweep and claimed a fifth game in the AL championship series.

"This," Ortiz said, "is a team that never gives up."

Many fans who had been praying, holding hands and hoping against hope a few innings earlier, burst into cheers when Ortiz connected. Long after Sunday turned into Monday, there was still plenty of energy inside old Fenway Park.

Even Ortiz danced home to his teammates waiting at the plate. "We always find a way to make it hard for ourselves," Red Sox starter Derek Lowe said.

This game lasted 5 hours, 2 minutes and ended at 1:22 a.m. EDT. Saturday's 19-8 victory by the Yankees took 4 hours, 20 minutes.

And the teams had about 15 hours to prepare for Game 5, when Pedro Martinez drew the pitching assignment for the Red Sox against Mike Mussina.

"Everybody's going to have trouble sleeping, probably except maybe from exhaustion," Yankees manager Joe Torre said.

Of the 25 previous teams to fall behind 3-0 in a best-of-seven series, 20 were swept, three lost in five games and two lost in six. The Red Sox say if they win again, injured Curt Schilling would be ready to start Tuesday in New York.

"We've just got to get to Game 6," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said.

Quantrill, New York's fifth pitcher, relieved Tom Gordon to start the 12th and allowed a lead-off single to Manny Ramirez.



Boston's Dave Roberts slides home with the tying run against New York Yankees in the ninth inning Sunday night. Boston won Game 4 of the AL championship series 6-4 in 12 innings, but still trails 3-1 in the series.

Ortiz then joined New York's Bernie Williams as the only players to hit two game-ending homers in postseason play. Ortiz is the first to do it twice in one year.

"Ortiz is just a great hitter, and he beat me," Quantrill said.

Boston was facing a disappointing end to a successful season when Rivera walked Kevin Millar to lead off the ninth.

"You put the walk away, and it would have been totally different," Rivera said. "It wasn't the way I planned it today."

After some pickoff throws, pinch-runner Dave Roberts stole second on the first pitch to Mueller.

"The three pickoff moves got me back into the game. I hadn't played in a while, and it helped me get rid of the jitters," Roberts said.

Mueller then lined the ball up

the middle as Roberts easily scored from second and Rivera swung his right arm in disgust. He has blown just four saves in 36 postseason chances, but two have come in the past 12 days.

"It certainly is disappointing," Torre said. "We're so used to Mo going out there and getting people out, which he did tonight. It's just that the walk and stolen base was the difference in that ninth inning."

With Boston closer Keith Foulke already having pitched 2½ innings, Alan Embree came in and got through the 10th. Curtis Leskanen escaped an 11th-inning jam by retiring Williams on a bases-loaded flyout, then stranded a runner at second in the 12th by striking out Miguel Cairo.

"Their bullpen did a great job. They made pitches when they had to," New York shortstop

Derek Jeter said. "We definitely let opportunities get by."

The Yankees, who stranded 14 runners, took a 2-0 lead in the third. After Jeter singled with two outs off Lowe, Alex Rodriguez hit a drive to left field over an advertising sign atop the Green Monster, his second homer in two nights.

Sidelined since Oct. 1 with a tired shoulder, Yankees starter Orlando Hernandez baffled Boston with pitches ranging from a 91 mph fastball to a 55 mph curve. Then, in the fifth, the Red Sox went ahead 3-2 on three walks, Cabrera's RBI single and Ortiz's two-run single.

The Yankees came back to score twice in the sixth, with Hideki Matsui starting the rally with a one-out triple. He scored on an infield hit, one of two run-scoring tricklers for New York in the inning.

Ray Boone, baseball family patriarch, dies

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Two-time All-Star Ray Boone, patriarch of a three-generation baseball family, died early Sunday following a long illness. He was 81.

Boone had been hospitalized for six months with complications following surgery, his wife, Pat, said.

"It's a blessing," she said. "He had a great life."

Boone played from 1948-60 with six teams and was followed

into the big leagues by son Bob and grandsons Bret and Aaron.

"We were the first three-generation family," Pat Boone said. "We're not the only one, but we were the first."

Boone was an infielder who had a career .275 batting average, with 151 home runs and 737 RBIs. He played for the Cleveland Indians, Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, Kansas City Athletics, Milwaukee Braves and the Boston Red Sox.

He was an All-Star third baseman for Detroit in 1954 and 1956.

Bob Boone played from 1972-90, and Bret Boone broke into the big leagues with Seattle in 1992. Aaron Boone made his debut in 1997.

The Boone family was the first to send three generations to the All-Star Game.

In 2000, when Bret Boone played for San Diego, he and his father and grandfather threw out the ceremonial first pitch before the Padres' home opener.

Schilling will start Game 6 if it's played

BY JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Pedro Martinez and Curt Schilling will try to help the Boston Red Sox win it, now that David Ortiz kept them in it.

Ortiz's homer in the 12th inning Sunday night gave the Red Sox a 6-4 victory over the New York Yankees, extending the AL championship series to a fifth game. Martinez drew the Game 5 start Monday night to try to force the series back to New York for a sixth game and give Schilling a chance to make up for a disastrous start in the opener.

"We've just got to get there," manager Terry Francona said after announcing that Schilling was healthy enough to get another start. "But that's our rotation."

The Red Sox traded for Schilling last November with the goal of pairing him with Martinez in a 1-2 pitching punch few teams could match. The co-aces helped Boston win 98 games in the regular season and sweep the Anaheim Angels in the first round of the playoffs.

But Schilling, who hurt his right ankle near the end of the regular season, aggravated the injury during his start in Anaheim.

And when he pitched Game 1 of the ALCS last Tuesday, a tendon sheath kept him from pushing off the mound and affected his velocity. New York won 10-7 on the way to taking a 3-0 series lead.

Schilling was still too sore on Thursday to get back on the mound, so he was scratched from his scheduled Game 5 start. But he was able to warm up normally on Friday and again on Sunday, giving Francona the confidence to restore him to the rotation.

"As far as I'm concerned it's not an issue," Francona said. "We've just got to get to Game 6."

Schilling helped lead the Arizona Diamondbacks to victory over New York in the 2001 World Series.

"When you use the words 'mystique' and 'aura,' those are dancers in a nightclub," Schilling said. "Those are not things we concern ourselves with on the ballfield."

After joining the Red Sox, Schilling proclaimed, "I guess I hate the Yankees now." After regular season starts he could be spotted wearing a "Yankee Hater" cap. But when he got the opportunity to back up his words in the playoffs, his ankle let him down.

Schilling allowed six runs in three innings in the series-opening loss, his worst postseason performance since 1993.

He looked forward to this possible match-up as far back as Thanksgiving last year, "Francona said last week. "When he went out there, he was kind of unable to pitch like he wanted to, I'm sure that was very tough for him, and us, too."

NLCS: Lidge saves day as Cards pen falters

NLCS, from back page

"I just lost my cool," Taveraz said.

When the inning ended, Taveraz bent over as he walked to the dugout and appeared to berate himself. His antics were replayed on the stadium scoreboard, and that bothered Cardinals manager Tony La Russa.

"I think ever since I've been around, since 1996, the Astros are as classy an organization as anything I've met in the National League," he said. "But even Sinatra clears his throat, and I think that was below their standards and that was disappointing."

Dan Wheeler wound up with the win, pitching one inning in relief before letting Lidge go to two innings for the second straight day.

With Roy Oswalt on the mound, the Astros really liked this pitching matchup. Yet, the righty who led the league with 20 wins was far from his best. He hung around for six innings and didn't strike out a single hitter for the first time since July 2003.

Oswalt went 2-0 against St. Louis this season, then won the clinching Game 5 of the first round at Atlanta. But he seemed too eager and too excited at the mound and never found his rhythm.

Fortunately for the Astros, St. Louis' Jason Marquis wasn't much better.

Bumped down in the rotation after getting hit hard by Los Angeles in Game 2 of the opening round, he was in constant trouble against Houston.

La Russa kept looking for edges, and a couple of lineup

Most home runs in one postseason

- 6 — Carlos Beltran, Houston, 2004.
- 6 — Barry Bonds, San Francisco, 2002.
- 6 — Troy Glaus, Anaheim, 2002.
- 6 — Rich Aurilia, San Francisco, 2002.
- 6 — Jim Thome, Cleveland, 1998.
- 6 — Benji Molina, Philadelphia, 1993.
- 6 — Ken Griffey Jr., Seattle, 1995.
- 6 — Bob Robertson, Pittsburgh, 1971.
- 6 — Albert Pujols, St. Louis, 2004.
- 6 — Todd Walker, Atlanta, 1996.
- 6 — Juan Gonzalez, Texas, 1996.
- 6 — Fred McGriff, Boston, 1993.
- 6 — Willie Stargatz, Pittsburgh, 1979.
- 6 — Davey Lopes, Los Angeles, 1978.
- 6 — Reggie Jackson, N.Y. Yankees, 1977.

Home runs in consecutive playoff games

- 4 (active) — Juan Gonzalez, Texas vs. New York, 1996, NLCS, Game 4.
- 4 — Carlos Beltran, Houston vs. St. Louis, 2004, NLCS, Game 5 vs. St. Louis, 2004, Game 1-4.
- 4 — Jeffrey Leonard, San Francisco vs. St. Louis, 1987, Games 1-4.

shifts paid off. John Mabry started in place of left fielder Reggie Sanders and hit an RBI single, and rookie catcher Yadier Molina replaced Mike Matheny and threw out Craig Biggio trying to steal, and added a hit.

For the fourth straight game, the visiting team homered in the first inning. It was Pujols' turn this time, and he lined a two-run shot into the boxes above the left-field bleachers.

Lefty followed with a double and later scored on Mabry's single, marking the first time in 20 innings that St. Louis scored on something besides a home run.

Pujols was in the middle of the Cardinals' next two runs. He walked and scored on Jim Edmonds' sacrifice fly in the third, and hit an RBI single in the fourth for a 5-3 edge.

Bagwell hit an RBI double in the first and Berkman doubled home two more runs in the third.

Berkman's third homer of the NLCS pulled the Astros to 5-4 in the sixth against reliever Kiko Calero.

Houston tied it later in the inning on an RBI single by No. 8 hitter Raul Chavez. He is Oswalt's personal catcher and not known for hitting, but he cheered himself all the way down the line.

MLB scoreboard

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	
American League	
New York 10, Boston 7	Tuesday, Oct. 12
New York 3, Boston 1	Wednesday, Oct. 13
New York 4, Boston 3	Friday, Oct. 15
New York 10, Boston, post game	Saturday, Oct. 16
New York 15, Boston 8	Sunday, Oct. 17
Boston 6, New York 4 (12 innings)	New York leads series 4-1
National League	
New York (Mussina 12-9) at Boston (Martinez 16-9)	Tuesday, Oct. 18
Boston (Schilling 21-4) at New York (Lieber 14-8)	Wednesday, Oct. 20
Boston at New York, if necessary	Thursday, Oct. 21
National League	
St. Louis 10, Houston 7	Thursday, Oct. 14
St. Louis 6, Houston 4	Friday, Oct. 15
Houston 5, St. Louis 2	Saturday, Oct. 16
Houston 6, St. Louis 5, series tied 2-2	Sunday, Oct. 17
St. Louis 6, Houston 3	Monday, Oct. 18
Houston 3, St. Louis 1	Tuesday, Oct. 19
St. Louis 5, Houston 2	Wednesday, Oct. 20
Houston at St. Louis	Thursday, Oct. 21
Houston at St. Louis, if necessary	Friday, Oct. 22
National League	
St. Louis 10, Houston 7	Thursday, Oct. 14
St. Louis 6, Houston 4	Friday, Oct. 15
Houston 5, St. Louis 2	Saturday, Oct. 16
Houston 6, St. Louis 5, series tied 2-2	Sunday, Oct. 17
St. Louis 6, Houston 3	Monday, Oct. 18
Houston 3, St. Louis 1	Tuesday, Oct. 19
St. Louis 5, Houston 2	Wednesday, Oct. 20
Houston at St. Louis	Thursday, Oct. 21
Houston at St. Louis, if necessary	Friday, Oct. 22

Sunday Astros 6, Cardinals 5

ST. LOUIS					HOUSTON					ST. LOUIS				
	ab	r	b	h		ab	r	b	h		ab	r	b	h
Wlacier 2b	3	1	0	1	Bliggio if	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
LWalker 1f	3	1	0	2	Bogwell 1b	3	1	0	2	Clark 2f	3	2	1	0
Renteria 3b	5	1	0	2	Bogwell 1b	3	1	0	2	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Berkman 1b	3	0	0	2	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Matheny c	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Calero p	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
King p	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Louis 1b	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Ylino c	4	0	1	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Wheeler 1b	0	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Murphy 2f	2	0	1	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Calderon 2f	1	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
Oswalt p	1	0	0	0	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
St. Louis 6, Houston 5	31	5	0	9	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1	Edmonds 2f	3	0	0	1
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Unbeaten Eagles pummel Panthers

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia beat Carolina nine months to late.

In a rematch of last season's NFC championship game in Philadelphia, Terrell Owens had all of his 123 yards receiving in the first half and Lito Sheppard returned an interception 64 yards for a score in the undefeated Eagles' 30-7 victory Sunday.

The Eagles, in position for another playoff run, didn't need their best offensive effort to beat injury-depleted Carolina.

Owens failed to score, Donovan McNabb failed to throw a TD pass for the first time this year and the Eagles' 283 total yards were their fewest of the season.

"We put up enough points for us to win the game and that's the most important thing," McNabb said. "You can look at some of the team across the league and offensively they aren't clicking, but they are still winning."

The Eagles haven't lost since Carolina came to town for a 1-3 victory in the NFC title game, denying Philadelphia its first trip to the Super Bowl since the 1980 season. But the Eagles, who have lost three consecutive conference championship games, have come back strong, starting 5-0 for the first time since 1981.

Carolina, which lost to New England in the Super Bowl, fell to a 1-4. Only eight teams have overcome a 1-4 start to make the playoffs.

"I felt the best going into this game than I did all year. I just felt extremely good about what we're going to do out here," said Carolina's Jake Delhomme, who threw four interceptions. "It's just not happening. We're not carrying over."

Perhaps because while Delhomme struggled, there was no one else to bail him out. When Philadelphia's offense didn't convert long drives into touchdowns, it still got three field goals from David Akers and the interception return from Sheppard.

"He was just throwing it up, giving his receivers a chance to make a play," Sheppard said of Delhomme. "We were able to pick off a lot of passes. We know he doesn't

like to take sacks a lot. He just throws it up there."

McNabb, off to the best start of his six-year career, completed passes of 53 and 51 yards to Owens that led to 10 points. McNabb finished 14-for-26 for 209 yards and one interception.

Packers 38, Lions 10: Brett Favre threw two touchdown passes and moved past Fran Tarkenton into fourth place on the NFL career list with 47,106 yards passing.

Green Bay (2-4) snapped its first four-game losing streak in 13 years. Detroit (3-2) fell to 1-2 at home.

The game was close until Darren Sharper intercepted a pass early in the third quarter and returned it 36 yards — with a juke move and a hurdle into the end zone — to give the Packers a 24-10 lead.

Favre was 25-for-38 for 257 yards. He extended his streak with a TD pass to 11 games, passing Dan Marino and trailing only Johnny Unitas' record run of 47 straight. Favre played in his 197th game with the Packers, passing Bart Starr for No. 1 in franchise history.

Texans 20, Titans 10: At Nashville, David Carr threw for 266 yards and a touchdown, Kris Brown kicked field goals of 21 and 50 yards, and the Texans scored their first victory over the team they replaced in Houston.

The Texans improved to 3-3 for the first time in the franchise's three-season history by winning in the stadium Nashville built to lure the former Oilers away from Houston. The Texans did it with defense, intercepting four passes and stopping Steve McNair once.

The loss dropped the Titans (2-4) into sole possession of the AFC South cellar.

Falcons 21, Chargers 20: At Atlanta, Michael Vick threw a 10-yard TD pass by running for one touchdown, throwing for another and then taking care of the clock as the Falcons (5-1) matched their win total from all of last season.

Vick, whose rights were traded from San Diego to Atlanta in 2001, threw for 130 of his 218 yards in the fourth quarter and had a hand in all three Atlanta TDs.

Atlanta ended the Chargers' (3-3) two-game winning streak and kept them



Green Bay Packers wide receiver Javon Walker (84) hauls in a 50-yard pass in front of Detroit Lions cornerback Fernando Bryant (25) in the second quarter Sunday.

from matching their win total from last season.

Browns 34, Bengals 17: Jeff Garcia threw four touchdown passes — one a 99-yarder to Andre Davis to tie an NFL record — and the Browns overcame their sluggishness for a home win over the inept Bengals.

William Green rushed for 115 yards and Lee Suggs caught a 59-yard TD pass in the fourth quarter from Garcia as the Browns (3-3) moved to 3-0 at home for the first time since 1973. The Bengals fell to 1-4.

Garcia, called "skittish" by Browns coach Butch Davis after a loss in Pittsburgh last week, overcame two interceptions in the first half and finished 16-for-20 for 310 yards in his eighth career four-TD game.

Bills 20, Dolphins 13: Takeo Spikes returned an interception 11 yards for a touchdown, helping spark Buffalo's victory in a home game against the NFL's last two winless teams.

Aaron Schobel had 2½ sacks and Ron Edwards added two, leading a strong defensive effort in which the Bills (1-4) limited Miami (0-6) to just 212 yards net offense.

Willis McGahee had a strong debut in his first career start. The Bills' first-round pick in the 2003 draft had 111 yards rushing and put away the game with a 31-yard run that allowed the Bills to run out the clock.

The former University of Miami star missed his entire rookie season recovering from reconstructive surgery on his left knee.

Redskins 13, Bears 10: Clinton Portis had his best day since changing teams, and Washington throttled Chicago's inept offense.

Ending a four-game losing streak, the Redskins (2-4) sacked struggling Bears quarterback Jonathan Quinn three times in the final three minutes before Sean Taylor's closing-second interception sealed the victory.

The Bears (1-4) managed only 160 yards total offense and crossed midfield just three times.

Portis had failed to reach 100 yards in any of his previous four games for Washington, which obtained him in an offseason trade from Denver. He had 103 by the half on 21 attempts Sunday, including a twisting 19-yard run midway through the second quarter. He finished with 171 yards.

Jaguars 22, Chiefs 16: Byron Leftwich threw two touchdown passes, including a 14-yarder to Cortez Hankton with 45 seconds to play to lift the Jaguars.

Leftwich also ran for a score as the Jaguars (4-2) snapped a two-game losing streak and won in the final minute for the fourth time this season.

Davenport delays retirement after reaching No. 1

The Associated Press

Back to No. 1, Lindsay Davenport is putting retirement on hold and plans to play in next year's Australian Open.

Davenport officially made the WTA Tour computer rankings for the first time Monday.

She said she tentatively has worked out a 2005 schedule through March.

The three-time Grand Slam tournament champion, who's 28, said at Wimbledon that she thought this would be her final season. But a strong summer, including four straight titles and a 22-match winning streak, convinced Davenport that she can still contend.

"I was interested to hear that

actually no player has retired at No. 1, but I don't think that's going to matter at all," Davenport said in a conference call.

"I feel like I play for the opportunity and the chance to win Grand Slams. I have two chances this at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open," she added. "I'm looking forward to going to Australia and trying to win again, and that's definitely the way I'm headed right now."

Davenport moved up one place to overtake Amelie Mauresmo, who spent about a month at the top. The Frenchwoman was just the second player to reach No. 1 in the WTA rankings without winning a major.

Davenport first led the rankings in October 1998, then his brief stays in 1999 and 2000, last holding the spot in January 2002. She leads the tour in match victo-

ries this season with a 61-8 record and in titles with seven.

She wasn't able to add to her major titles (1998 U.S. Open, 1999 Wimbledon, 2000 Australian Open), but Davenport did reach the semifinals at the U.S. Open and Wimbledon this season, eliminated by the eventual champion each time.

At Flushing Meadows, Davenport lost to Svetlana Kuznetsov in three sets, hampered by a left hip injury.

"Mauresmo is second, followed by three Russians: French Open champion Anastasia Myskina, Kuznetsov, and two-time major runner-up Elena Dementieva. Justine Henin-Hardenne, No. 1 until Mauresmo replaced her Sept. 13, tumbled from No. 3 to No. 6.

Sorenstam rallies past Park
PALM DESERT, Calif. — Anni-

ka Sorenstam charged from three shots back over the final five holes to overtake Grace Park and win her fourth Samsung World Championship.

Sorenstam, the winner of six of her 15 tour events this year, shot a closing 5-under 67 to finish 18 under, three shots ahead of Park. The leader the first three days, Park finished with two bogeys for a 73.

Despite gusting winds, Sorenstam had a 4-under 32 on the back nine en route to her 54th career victory.

Sorenstam took sole possession of the lead for the first time in the tournament on the 17th hole when she sank a 6-foot birdie putt on No. 17. She chipped in a 40-footer from the fringe for an eagle 3 on the par-5, 538-yard No. 15 to catch Park at 17 under.

Loirena Ochoa (70) finished

third at 13 under, and defending champion Sophie Gustafson (71) was another two shots back in fourth.

Castrovese wins IRL finale

FORT WORTH, Texas — Helio Castrovese had a great restart with two laps to go after a lengthy caution and held off IndyCar Series champion Tony Kanaan to win the season finale Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway.

While Castrovese got to climb the fence to celebrate his first victory this year, Kanaan capped off a season in which he ran all 3,305 laps — the first driver in a major American series to complete every lap.

Kanaan clinched the series title with a runner-up finish in California two weeks ago. He finished outside the top five only once, and the Chevy Silverado was the sixth time this season he was second across the finish line.

Culpepper sets record with 5 more TD passes

BY MARY FOSTER

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Daunte Culpepper was just fine without Randy Moss.

Minnesota's quarterback threw five touchdown passes for the third time this season — an NFL record — to lead the Vikings past the New Orleans Saints 38-31 Sunday night.

"It's all about stepping up," Culpepper said. "Accepting the challenge and doing whatever it takes."

Moss, who leads the NFL in TD catches, injured his hamstring in the second quarter after making two receptions for 89 yards and a touchdown. It was the 10th consecutive game with a touchdown catch for Moss, who changed into a track suit and watched the second half from the sideline. "He was a little lonely without my man," Culpepper said. "But he's a soldier. He'll be back."

Despite stiff pressure from the Saints, Culpepper completed 26 of 37 passes for 425 yards and all those scores. It was a career high in passing yards for Culpepper, beating his previous record of 396 yards against Oakland on Nov. 16, 2003.

"In all my time in the NFL, I've never seen a quarterback this hot," said Saints cornerback Ashley Ambrose, a 13-year veteran.

The Vikings (4-1) had 605 yards of offense and converted eight of 11 third downs.

Culpepper, who also threw two interceptions and was sacked twice, has completed just over 72 percent of his passes this season, throwing for 1,766 yards and 18 TDs.

Rookie running back Mewelde Moore had another big game for Minnesota, rushing for 109 yards and catching seven passes for 78 yards.

"I had to stay calm and make sure I was focused," Moore said. "I had fun out there."

Nate Burleson had six receptions for 134 yards for Minnesota.

New Orleans' Aaron Brooks completed 22 of 38 passes for 249 yards and a touchdown. He was intercepted once. Deuce McAllister ran for 78 yards and two touchdowns on 18 carries.

A pass-interference call against Ambrose set up the Vikings' first touchdown, giving them a first down on the 1. On the next play, Culpepper hit Jermaine Wiggins for the touchdown.

Minnesota got its first interception of the season, preventing New Orleans (2-4) from scoring and setting up the Vikings' second score. Culpepper hit Moss in the end zone on a 43-yard play, making it 14-0 less than a minute into the second quarter.

The Saints recovered a fumbled snap and scored on a 2-yard run by McAllister that made it 14-7.

Marcus Robinson caught a 16-yard touchdown pass to give the Vikings a 21-7 lead. Then the Saints put together what he best drive of the half, going 73 yards in four plays, with Brooks connecting with Joe Horn for a 7-yard touchdown.

The Vikings opened the second half with Culpepper throwing a 9-yard touchdown pass to Wiggins for a 28-14 lead.

"He's a great QB," Saints coach Jim Haslett said. "We just didn't make any plays, and he made some fantastic plays."

On fourth-and-3 on their 28, the Saints lined up in punt formation, then snapped the ball to blocking back Fred McAfee, who scampered 53 yards to the Minnesota 19. McAllister finished it off with a 1-yard run, making it 28-21.

A 39-yard field goal by Morten Andersen stretched the Vikings' lead to 10 at 31-21 at the end of the third quarter. John Carney kicked a 45-yarder to pull New Orleans to 31-24 early in the fourth period.

Culpepper, who led the NFL with a 126.0 passer rating going into the game, threw his last touchdown pass to Robinson, making it 38-24.

Brooks then scrambled 5 yards for a touchdown to pull the Saints to 38-31 with 2:51 left. But Minnesota kept the ball the rest of the way.



Minnesota Vikings quarterback Daunte Culpepper (11) tosses a pass in the first half over New Orleans Saints linebacker Sedrick Hodge (52) Sunday night. It was the third time this season Culpepper threw five TD passes in a game, an NFL record.

Raiders pose no challenge for Broncos

BY JANIE MCCAULEY

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Jake Plummer hit his targets, Reuben Droughns hit his holes, and Denver's defense hit everybody in sight.

The Denver Broncos walked into the Oakland Coliseum with a swagger rarely seen in their anything-can-happen rivalry with the Raiders, and it was well deserved.

Plummer passed for 190 yards and three touchdowns. Droughns ran for 176 yards and a touchdown, and the Broncos took command of the AFC West with a 31-3 victory Sunday.

"We just pounded them in the third and fourth quarter. The quiet was nice," Plummer said.

Jeff Putterer, Dwayne Carswell and Ashley Lelie caught first-half touchdown passes from Plummer, who led the Broncos (5-1) to a 28-point cushion in the third quarter and 444 total yards. Droughns had his second straight 100-yard game, a week after running for 193 yards in a victory over Carolina.

His 38 carries were a franchise record for a non-overtime game.

"After my performance last week, I didn't want anybody to doubt I could do it again," said Droughns, who scored on a 4-yard run in the third quarter. "They were definitely frustrated. Any time you pound the ball and break tackles, they're going to get worn out a little bit."

Oakland's Jerry Rice, disgraced with his limited role, didn't



Oakland's Ray Buchanan, left, and Danny Clark try to stop Denver's Reuben Droughns during their game on Sunday in Oakland, Calif.

catch a pass for the third time this season and the second straight week. The 42-year-old Rice, who asked for a trade last week, considered this the most devastating loss of his career.

"This is probably the worst one because I felt like we weren't in the ballgame. We can't let teams jump up on us," said Rice, who heard fans chanting "Jerry! Jerry!" as the clock ticked away in the final minutes. "I just hope nobody is basically going to throw the towel in, and we keep working hard in practice."

Denver's defense was suffocating, holding the Raiders' inept offense to 145 yards. The Raiders (2-4) don't keep track of negative statistics in their media book, but it was surely one of the most embarrassing performances in franchise history.

"We never get tired of dominat-

ing someone," Denver safety John Lynch said. "We were talking about it every day in the huddle in the second half. 'Keep them down, keep them down, keep them down.'"

After Denver's early scores dug a huge hole for the Raiders, the rare sellout crowd boomed whenever Collins' crew took the field. The Raiders hoped returning home would cure their abundance of problems, but coach Norv Turner's first season is quickly turning ugly after three straight losses.

"It really didn't bother me," Collins said. "I understand that's part of it. When a team's struggling like we are right now, when the offense is struggling, the quarterback usually gets the blame for it. I'm to blame for my fair share of what's gone on the last couple of weeks. We just didn't give them a whole lot to cheer about today."

Steelers capitalize on Cowboys' error

BY KRISTIE RIEKKE

The Associated Press

IRVING, Texas — Bill Parcells warned the Dallas Cowboys about how good Ben Roethlisberger could be.

Pittsburgh's rookie quarterback was as good as advertised.

"He's going to be the rookie of the year," Cowboys defensive end Greg Ellis said after Roethlisberger led the Steelers to a 24-0 comeback victory Sunday. "He has the physical and mental talent that you need."

"To be that young and that good, you have to credit him for that."

Roethlisberger rattled the Cowboys for 21-for-25 passing and two touchdowns to become the first rookie quarterback to go 4-0 since Phil Simms did it in 1979 with the New York Giants. The former Miami of Ohio star also became the first Pittsburgh quarterback to win in Dallas since Terry Bradshaw in 1982.

"I can't say enough about him," Steelers coach Bill Cowher said. "I thought this would be a good test for him and it was."

The Cowboys also made another huge mistake that led to another loss.

A fumble by quarterback Vinny Testaverde late in the game set up the Steelers' winning touchdown. After Pittsburgh recovered, Jerome Bettis scored from 2 yards out to cap a short drive.

Parcells had talked all week about Roethlisberger's abilities, even comparing him to a young Dan Marino.

"I'm going to be an outstanding quarterback," Parcells said. "He's got great poise. I haven't changed my mind about that."

Roethlisberger's teammates were impressed, too.

"He can flat-out play," receiver Plaxico Burress said. "I think Parcells was right."

Roethlisberger had a 5-yard touchdown pass to Burress in the first quarter as he rolled out of the pocket to elude the rush and rifled the ball into the end zone.

On his 7-yard TD pass to Jerome Tuman early in the fourth, Roethlisberger withstood the pressure in the pocket waiting for Tuman to get open.

The rookie had nine straight completions on the Steelers' last two scoring drives and 11 in one stretch.

Roethlisberger, who was sacked three times, said his right knee was hurting during the game. But he stayed cool under pressure to make the key plays against a tough pass rush.

"I had nothing to plan or push off of," he said. "I could not throw off my back leg. They were very fast and physical and they came after us."

The Cowboys (2-3) led 20-10 entering the fourth quarter.

Testaverde was 23-for-36 for 284 yards and a touchdown but also fumbled twice, including the costly late turnover.

"It was a big play — one big play — and one big reason we lost," he said. "It's unfortunate."

The Cowboys had a chance to win it in the final second after going 30 yards on a fifth pass and a lateral, but Testaverde's last toss to the end zone was incomplete.

Dallas' inability to finish another game is the latest concern for Parcells as his team has routinely made critical mistakes.



Seattle Seahawks' Koren Robinson drops a pass in the first half in front of New England Patriots' Tyrone Poole during their game at Gillette Stadium, in Foxborough, Mass.

Pats hang on for 20th win

BY HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. — Tom Brady sat on the grass with a dazed look, his helmet nearby after a hard hit. His teammates were concerned about the quarterback who led them to 19 straight wins.

Brady strapped his helmet back on and eventually threw a big completion. New England's defense stopped Seattle's comeback. And just like that, the Patriots extended their NFL record for consecutive wins, including the playoffs, with a 30-20 victory over the Seahawks on Sunday.

"You hate to see the guy that's making all the calls and is responsible for leading our offense get banged around like that," tackle Matt Light said.

The Patriots were leading 20-9 when Brady was jarred by Michael Boulware, and Rocky Bernard recovered the fumble on the first play of the fourth quarter. On the Patriots' next possession, Brady threw an interception to Boulware that set up Shaun Alexander's 9-yard run, Seattle's only touchdown, and a two-point conversion cut the lead to 20-17.

"I felt fine," Brady said. "You just sort of pop up, run over to the sideline, get your bearings and figure out how you are going to go back on the field and tackle it the

next time. And then, obviously, I didn't do a great job."

He made up for the interception with a 48-yard pass to Bethel Johnson on third-and-7 with 2:45 left in the game that put the ball at Seattle's 12-yard line. Three plays later, Cory Dillon scored his second touchdown on a 9-yard run, and the Patriots led 30-20 with 1:55 to play.

Had the Patriots punted there, Seattle would have had plenty of time to try for the winning points. The Seahawks challenged Johnson's diving catch, but the officials ruled he had control of the ball before it hit the ground.

"I think he made a great catch," Seattle coach Mike Holmgren said. "I really said that play differently than the referee."

Catch or no catch, Dillon had no doubt what the play meant.

"That's a big-time catch," Dillon said. "Without the catch, who knows?"

Without it, the Patriots (5-0) might have lost their shot at the record for consecutive wins in the regular season. They tied Chicago's record of 17 straight in 1933-34 and can break it at home next Sunday against the New York Jets, also 5-0.

"I'm respectful of what history says," New England coach Bill Belichick said, "but it is more important [that] we beat Seattle and try to keep pace with the Jets."

Seattle (3-2) is tied for the NFC West lead with St. Louis, up against Tampa Bay on Monday night. In their previous game, the Rams beat the Seahawks 33-27 in overtime after trailing 27-10 for six minutes left in the fourth quarter.

"We've just had a couple of slip-ups," Seattle cornerback Marcus Trufant said. "There's still a lot of season left."

The Seahawks stumbled early when Matt Hasselbeck, who had thrown two interceptions in his first five games, threw two on their first two series. They led to Dillon's 1-yard scoring run and the first of Adam Vinatieri's three field goals, a 40-yarder. The Patriots made it 17-0 on Brady's 6-yard touchdown pass to David Patten and led 20-9 after scoring on their first four possessions.

"We came out red jittery in the first half," Holmgren said. "Against a team like New England, that's a pretty tough road to go to."

Still, the Seahawks cut the lead to 23-20 with 3:01 left on Josh Brown's fourth field goal, a 31-yarder. An intentional grounding call against Hasselbeck on that series hurt their chances for a go-ahead touchdown.

"I threw it thinking someone was going to peel out" toward the ball, Hasselbeck said. "That was not the big play that I thought. There were 20 plays ahead of that one."

Pennington fires up Jets to stay unbeaten

BY ANDREA ADELSON
The Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Jonathan Vilma heard about the Jets' quest to make history before he played in his first professional game.

Back in May, Vilma remembered coach Herman Edwards preaching about the need to make something positive happen for the franchise.

The rookie linebacker helped make it happen Sunday.

Chad Pennington keyed a second-half rally, and Vilma sealed it with an interception, guiding New York to a 22-14 victory over San Francisco.

Though the Jets struggled in the first half, they made it to 5-0 for the first time in their 45-year history.

"It means a lot," Vilma said of the 5-0 start. "We have been talking about it for the longest time, and we have just been executing and playing."

The Jets have feasted on weak opponents so far, beating teams that are a combined 6-22. Things get much harder next Sunday, when they play at undefeated New England.

They certainly made things hard on themselves against San Francisco (1-5), which came in with an overtime victory over worthy Arizona. The Jets punted out to a 14-0 lead, but defensive coordinator Donnie Henderson cut his crew going after coming down from the coaches box to the sideline, and Pennington got the offense moving with a fiery half-time speech.

"That's the maddest I've ever seen Chad," said running back Curtis Martin, who had 111 yards on 25 carries and two touchdowns, while passing Marcus Allen for eighth place on the NFL's career rushing list with 12,282 yards.

Pennington finished 20-for-30 for 222 yards, giving 11-for-14 for 110 yards in the second half. After halftime, the Jets shut out the 49ers and limited Tim Rattay to 93 yards passing. Rattay finished 18-for-28 for 286 yards with a touchdown and an interception.

Edwards said the pressure of making team history weighed on his players.

"We were kind of lethargic for

some reason," Edwards said. "That can happen. There was a lot of pressure on this team all of a sudden to win five games. That was looming. In the second half, we adjusted and were able to come back and win the game."

The Jets began their comeback in the third quarter when LaMont Jordan capped a 91-yard run with a 17-yard scoring run. On their next series, Pennington went to work again, leading the Jets 70 yards. Martin scored from the 1 to give the Jets the lead. New York failed on both 2-point attempts.

But San Francisco had two good chances to take the lead, trailing 15-14.

The 49ers got the ball at their 38 with 7:38 to go and drove to New York's 27 before Arnaz Batte-fume fumbled the ball from Rattay on an end-around and lost 8 yards, knocking them out of field goal range.

Then, with the ball on the San Francisco 35 with 1:44 remaining, Vilma picked off Rattay's poorly thrown pass, ending any hope of a rally. Martin added a 9-yard touchdown run for the final margin.

"We've got find a way to win," San Francisco coach Dennis Erickson said. "We've got to make plays at the end. We're finding a way to not make plays."

They certainly made them in the first half. Rattay threw a beautiful pass down the sideline to Brandon Lloyd, who easily ran in a 33-yard touchdown to make it 7-0.

The Niners scored again on their next drive when Rattay found Batte-fume for a 65-yard reception to the Jets 2. Kevin Barlow scored on the next play for a 14-0 lead.

Now San Francisco has to deal with more injuries going into the bye week. Guard Justin Smiley (knee bruise), cornerback Ahmed Plummer (high strain), Barlow (shoulder), fullback Terry Jackson (toe sprain), Lloyd (calc bruise) and tackle Scott Cragg (hip bruise) were hurt, but Erickson said none of the injuries are considered serious.

As for the Jets, they are happy to save the historic victory for just one night.

"It's a big deal," tackle Jason Ferguson said. "But the season doesn't end at 5-0."

Sunday's NFL stars:



■ Jeff Garcia, Cleveland, was 16-for-23 with 310 yards and four touchdowns in a 34-17 victory over Cincinnati.

■ Byron Leftwich, Jaguars, threw for 286 yards and two touchdowns, including a 16-yard toss to Cortez Hankton with 46 seconds to play, lifting Jacksonville past Kansas City 22-16.

■ Ben Roethlisberger, Pittsburgh, completed 21 of 25 passes, threw two scoring drives in a 24-20 comeback win at Dallas.

■ Trent Green, Chiefs, was 23-for-33 for 315 yards and two touchdowns, but Kansas City lost 22-16 at Jacksonville.

Quarterbacks

■ Daunte Culpepper, Minnesota, completed 26 of 37 for 425 yards and five touchdowns in a 38-31 victory over New Orleans.

■ Jeff Garcia, Cleveland, was 16-for-23 with 310 yards and four touchdowns in a 34-17 victory over Cincinnati.

■ Byron Leftwich, Jaguars, threw for 286 yards and two touchdowns, including a 16-yard toss to Cortez Hankton with 46 seconds to play, lifting Jacksonville past Kansas City 22-16.

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■ Trent Green, Chiefs, was 23-for-33 for 315 yards and two touchdowns, but Kansas City lost 22-16 at Jacksonville.

Running Backs

■ Reuben Droughns, Broncos, rushed for 176 yards and a touchdown in a 33-17 victory over Oakland. Droughns ran for 193 yards last week against Carolina.

■ Curtis Martin, Jets, ran for 111 yards and two touchdowns in a 22-14 victory over San Francisco. His fourth 100-yarder this year.

■ Clinton Portis, Redskins, carried three times for 171 yards in Washington's 13-10 victory at Chicago.

■ Curtis McGehee, Bills, rushed for 111 yards in his first NFL start, lifting Buffalo to a 20-13 win over Miami.

■ Cory Dillon, Patriots, ran for 165 yards and two touchdowns in New England's 20th straight victory — 30-20 over Seattle.

Receivers

■ Koren Robinson, Seahawks, caught nine passes for 150 yards but it wasn't enough for Seattle, which lost 30-20 to San Francisco.

■ Lee Suggs, Browns, caught five passes for 100 yards — including a 69-yard touchdown — to help Cleveland come back to reach the playoffs.

■ Tim Rattay, 49ers, threw for 286 yards and two touchdowns in a 22-14 victory over the Jets.

■ Donald Driver, Packers, had nine receptions for 110 yards and two touchdowns in Green Bay's 38-10 victory over the Bears.

■ Johnnie Morton, Chiefs, had 111 yards on seven receptions, but Kansas City lost 22-16 at Jacksonville.



SPORTS



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first BCS standings,
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Beltran blast evens NLCS

Homers in record fifth straight playoff game

BY BEN WALKER
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Julian Tavaraz must have forgotten about Carlos Beltran when he said the Cardinals didn't think the Houston Astros were so special.

Beltran struck again Sunday, homering in a record fifth straight postseason game and lifting the Astros over St. Louis 6-5 to even the NL championship series 2-2.

"There's no better feeling," he said. Before Game 1, the excitable Tavaraz upset the Astros with this assessment: "We don't look at the Houston Astros like this is a great team. They are good, but we are better than them. We are the best because we've got 108 wins. We've proved it."

Right now, no one's better than Beltran. He launched a tiebreaking shot off Tavaraz in the seventh inning into the Houston bullpen, reaching way down to golf a 2-2 slider over the right-field wall.

"Barry Bonds is the best hitter in base-

ball. I don't think he could have hit that pitch," Tavaraz said. "I can't believe he hit it."

Beltran ensured the teams will go back to Busch Stadium to settle who goes to the World Series. Meantime, there's Game 5 Monday night, with Brandon Backe starting for Houston against Woody Williams.

Beltran broke the record set by Jeffrey Leonard and tied by Juan Gonzalez in 1996 for consecutive postseason games with a home run.

He also matched Bonds' 2002 record for homers in a single postseason.

"This is as good as I've ever seen anybody swing the bat, not just Carlos Beltran," Astros manager Phil Garner said. "He's some kind of locked in."

Beltran is getting richer and richer with each swing. The switch-hitting, All-Star center fielder might be the prime free agent on the market once the season ends. At this moment, he's aiming for a ring.

"I'm just being relaxed, patient at the plate," Beltran said.

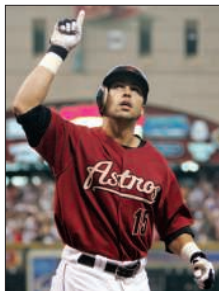
Sluggers again dominated, although not quite the way they did in Game 3 of the ALCS at Fenway Park, where the Yankees obliterated Boston 19-8 Saturday night.

Albert Pujols homered for St. Louis, then came close to a go-ahead two-run homer in the ninth against Brad Lidge. But the ball was caught on the warning track, and the Astros closer struck out Scott Rolen for his second straight save.

Lance Berkman also homered for Houston, giving the teams a combined 19 home runs through only four games.

After Beltran sent the crowd at Minute Maid Park into a frenzy, Tavaraz further angered the Astros when he threw a fast-ball over the head of the next hitter, Jeff Bagwell. They exchanged words, plate umpire Mike Winters warned against further trouble and played resumed without any problems.

SEE NLCS ON PAGE 27



Carlos Beltran reacts after hitting the game-winning home run in the seventh inning against the St. Louis Cardinals.

AP

Ortiz gives Boston hope



David Ortiz, right, is greeted by jubilant Red Sox teammates at the plate after his game-winning home run in the 12th inning Sunday against the Yankees extended the ALCS to a fifth game, scheduled for Monday after this edition went to press. For more on Game 4, see Page 26.



Patriots hold on while Jets rally, but both improve to 5-0 setting up AFC showdown

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Culpepper throws five TD passes for third time this season Page 30